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FERGUSSON

ON

THE EPISTLES.



A

BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

TO THE

GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS,
AND THESSALONIANS.

BY JAMES ✓ FERGUSON,

MINISTER AT KILWINNING.

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THE
EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND NOBLE LORDS

ALEXANDER, EARL OF EGLINTOUN, &c.

AND

HUGH, LORD MONTGOMERY, HIS SON,

AND TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND NOBLE LADY, THE

LADY MARY LESLEY, LADY MONTGOMERY.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

It is decreed in heaven, that "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. God only wise hath so resolved, that, by means of sanctified trouble, the heirs of glory may be weaned from earth, and learn to place their chief contentment and happiness, not upon their enjoyments below, which are uncertain, empty and perishing, but upon things above, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them." How hard were it to make even those who are born of God long to be dissolved and bid adieu to all their sublunary contentments, except the Lord in mercy did place a prick in every one of those roses, and make their most promising earthly comforts within a little to prove "as streams of brooks that pass away," Job vi. 15; and how should this conciliate love to a sad and suffering lot, and make the Lord's people (who are strangers and pilgrims) delight in the way which leadeth to such an home as heaven is? It is indeed our unacquaintance with Scripture, and with what the word of truth holdeth forth to be the mind of God, while he "scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," which doth occasion so much proud rising of spirit, or base dejectedness of mind, when the Lord doth not carve us out such a satisfying lot in all things as we would. How often do we mistake our way, and little less than quarrel with God, only because he hedgeth us in with thorns of affliction, that we cannot find out our lovers? and therefore that man is truly blessed whom the Lord doth not only chastise, but also "instruct out of his law," Psal. xciv. 12; and thereby make him understand and "hear the voice of the rod, and of

him who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9. And herein indeed the Lord doth greatly manifest his marvellous lovingkindness, and in wrath remembereth mercy; that he joineth instruction with correction, and doth furnish his afflicted people with abundant means, by which they may take up the mind of God for good unto them under his saddest dispensations, even that "the fruit of affliction is to take away their sin," Isa. xxvii. 9; that "he doth punish them seven times more, and yet seven times more, until their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity," Lev. xxvi. 24, 28, 41; that though he "visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: nevertheless his lovingkindness will he not utterly take from him," Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33; and that "when they are judged, they are chastened of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world," 1 Cor. xi. 32. All this, and much more to this purpose, hath the Lord made known by his Word, and doth daily inculcate and make more and more known by his sent ministers, who, according to their commission, do open up and apply the rich treasure of holy Scripture unto the Lord's people of their charge. And, as if all this were not sufficient, he hath besides stirred up the spirits of many of his servants in every age to commit their labours upon Scripture unto writing, for the more public use of the church of God, not only in the present, but also the succeeding generations.

As for myself, I ingenuously profess, that, being conscious of mine own weakness, I did much incline to rest satisfied with expressing my commission by word only in preaching to, and conferring with my flock, and those of my charge: but, being earnestly requested, and in a

manner commanded by some reverend brethren, whom I honour and reverence in the Lord, to draw up briefly in writ a plain analysis, a short and sound exposition of, and the chief observations grounded upon such scriptures as I had either largely preached upon, or more briefly opened up to the Lord's people of my charge, I showed them some of my weak endeavours of that kind, to be disposed upon at their pleasure; which, when they were pleased to publish, and to call for more work of the same nature, expressing their confidence, that what I had already done was acceptable to all that love the truth, and would be edifying to the present and after ages; and, being thereunto also encouraged by divers faithful and understanding persons; I have, in obedience to their desires, given out this other piece, to be disposed of by them as they should see good.

And, seeing they have advised the publishing of it, to whom could I, with more confidence and conscience of duty, dedicate these my mean labours than to your Honours? considering that God hath appointed me "to watch for your souls, as one who must give an account," and that your Honours have endeavoured, for your parts, to encourage me to go about all the parts of my ministry "with joy, and not with grief."

My Lords, when I called to remembrance how long each of you was detained these years by-past from enjoying the benefit of my public ministry, by your necessitated abode elsewhere, I thought the best way to give you an account, and to make you reap some fruit of my labours in your absence, was, to present these my weak endeavours to your Honours: and what you have heard from me upon these scriptures in public, when you were permitted to be my hearers, I hope this little piece shall conduce to bring it to your remembrance; and the Lord himself convey it into your hearts, there to remain, to make your Honours more and more wise to salvation, that in the day of the Lord Jesus ye may be matter of joy, and a crown of rejoicing to those who have laboured among you and spoken the word of God unto you.

And for you, Madam, who have had liberty to be my hearer more frequently and constantly than my noble Lords, as I trust your Honour will observe there is a good harmony betwixt that which I taught in the congregation and which I now publish to the world; and that this little

piece shall (according to your usual diligence in searching Scripture, and in keeping fellowship with God in the practice of all commanded duties) be improved by your Honour for your further edification and encouragement to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing:" so, when I consider how refreshing it hath been often unto me to behold your sweet submission under the Lord's hand, your truly Christian courage under variety of afflictions, your tractable disposition to receive wholesome counsels, your willingness to be instructed in the way to life, and, in order to that end, to attend public duties beyond many of your equals; your strengthening my hands in the work of my ministry, as by other means, so especially by your good example amongst the people of my charge, I should judge myself very unanswerable to God, and exceeding much blameworthy, if I did not encourage your Honour to make progress in that good way wherein ye are already engaged. And if my present essay upon this piece of sacred truth do contribute any thing to this end, it shall be matter of thanksgiving from me unto the Lord, who alone "doth teach his people to profit."

And finally, I do profess unto you all (Right Honourable and most dearly beloved in our Lord) that those words, 2 Pet. i. 12—15, sound much in mine ears, and do sometimes work upon my heart, if so I may in some measure follow the example of that blessed apostle who wrote them: "Wherefore," saith he, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of those things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance. Knowing, that ere long" (or not knowing how soon) "I must put off this tabernacle. Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Now, it is the Lord alone who bleaseth the endeavours of his servants, and giveth increase both to our planting and watering. To whose rich and saving grace I commend your Honours most heartily, and shall ever pray for all manner of blessings on you and all your rising posterity, as is the duty of

Your Honours' obliged Servant, who
beggeth grace to approve himself

Your faithful Pastor,

JAMES FERGUSSON.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

I do here present thee with an exposition of two of Paul's epistles, after the pattern (so far as my weakness could reach) held forth by those two reverend brethren, Mr. David Dickson and Mr. George Hutcheson, in their late pieces of this kind upon other parcels of Holy Scripture.

The reasons of my undertaking (besides what is held forth in the former epistle) were not any confidence I had to come up to my copy, wherein I doubt not but, as I myself am very conscious, so the intelligent reader will easily perceive that I come far short, and that the superstructure by me is much unanswerable, as to fulness of purpose, accuracy and style of language, to the foundation laid by them: but, first, an apprehension I had, that as the completing of such a work as this upon the whole Scripture, is much wished for by many, and would prove acceptable and profitable to the Church of Christ; so, many of greater abilities and fitness than I for such a task, who did lie by, might be strongly induced to contribute their endeavours towards it, if any essay of mine should be accepted, wherein I bless the Lord, I have not been in a mistake, as may appear by what is sent abroad to the world since the publishing of my former piece, by a reverend brother, my nearest fellow-labourer in the work of the ministry, upon the two epistles of Peter. And, secondly, I was one of those who, some ten years ago, without my knowledge, were pitched upon by some Reverend Brethren of the ministry for carrying on this work: at which time I almost perfected the whole task then allotted for me; but, through some sad accident in those times of trouble, all the papers I had written upon that subject, were destroyed and lost, and so a great part of my time and life in a manner lost with them: which notwithstanding did not so discourage me, but the remembrance of what

sweetness I tasted in that study, and of the manifold advantage wherewith it did recompense my pains, did make me full seven years after more easy to be wrought upon and persuaded by the earnest desires of others to make a new essay, as being confident from former experience, I myself at least should be no loser by it.

If any shall think this present piece to be of greater length than my former, and some others of this kind are, I hope they will (for satisfaction) consider, that seeing the apostle doth discuss a great and needful controversy in the Epistle to the Galatians, it requireth time and enlargement to find and follow the thread of an intricate dispute; and to explain those excellent truths, which the apostle doth so much labour to assert. And as to the Epistle to the Ephesians, it is well known to be so comprehensive (as containing the whole substance of Christian religion in so little bulk) that hardly can any man (at least not I) satisfy either himself, or his reader, without enlarging himself somewhat in opening up such a rich treasure and excellent subject.

I know there may be much coincidence of doctrines, which do natively arise from those epistles and from those others to the Philippians and Colossians; but, the reader may, for his satisfaction, consider that (besides I have frequently referred him to those places, where such doctrines were formerly raised) seeing the Spirit of God hath thought it necessary to assert necessary truths oftener than once, in several scriptures, for our further confirmation, it should not be thought an idle repetition in a writer to draw out the same conclusions from the same truths when they occur: for hereby is given a proof of the sufficiency and fruitfulness of Scripture, as furnishing many arguments to establish one and the same necessary truth; "to write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe," saith our apostle, Phil. iii. 1.

I trust it shall not offend, that in some places

I do not only hold forth the doctrine and conclusion, which flow naturally from the text ; but also couch in some explanations, cautions, reasons, and sometimes some short uses ; for those serve to obviate mistakes about the truth in hand, and to leave some impression of it upon the heart and affections.

If any take exception that scriptures are too frequently cited, and think they are hereby retarded from making progress in reading the treatise, they may be pleased to consider, that I cite no scriptures to confirm the doctrines themselves, which, as I conceive, are sufficiently grounded upon, and confirmed from the text, but only the cautions, reasons, and uses of those doctrines, which not being grounded upon the present scripture, I desired none to take off my hand upon trust. However, if any understand the purpose to be truth, and grounded upon Scripture, he needeth not stand to seek the particular passage, which is brought to prove it, except he please and judge it convenient, that he may have some further ground of meditation upon the truth in hand thereby afforded.

And now, beloved Christians, let me exhort you all, and especially you to whom the Lord hath carved out such a lot in things worldly that ye have abundance of time and leisure from your other employments, give more of your time to the searching of Scripture, and labour to understand the mind of God concerning your salvation revealed therein. Hereby shall you be preserved from being led aside by Satan's emissaries, who do err, not knowing the Scrip-

tures, Matt. xxii. 29. Hereby ye shall be made wise unto salvation, and rendered victorious over your strongest lusts, and thoroughly fitted for the most difficult duties, while the Lord by his Spirit shall make the Scriptures profitable unto you for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and thereby make you perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Only, in order to the gaining of those rich advantages by reading Scripture, ye would read, not superficially, but conscientiously, attentively, and devoutly ; and do not slight to take what helps ye can get from the labours of others, for attaining to the increase of solid knowledge and sanctifying grace.

What human frailties you discern in this piece of mine (which doubtless are not a few) pity them, and so much the more pray for me that I may discern and amend them : and if any will be so faithful and free as to advertise me either immediately, or by causing others to acquaint me with them, I shall (God willing) be humbly thankful, and endeavour to make the best use I can of their freedom, knowing that such reproofs will not break my head, but be as a precious ointment. The great and gracious God bless all your endeavours for advancing yourselves and your relations in knowledge and grace. So prayeth,

Your servant in the Lord,

JAMES FERGUSSON.

Kilwinning, May 12, 1658.

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THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.



AUL, having planted several churches in Galatia, Acts xvi. 6, and xviii, 23, a region of Asia the less; and being now, as it seemeth, a prisoner at Rome, chap. vi. 17, some false apostles had seduced these churches from the sincere doctrine of the gospel preach-

ed by Paul, chap. i. 6; persuading them that the observation of the Levitical ceremonies, now abolished, was necessary, chap. vi. 13; and that justification and salvation were partly from faith in Christ, and partly also from their own works, chap. iii. 2, and iv. 21; and that Paul was no lawful apostle, no ways to be compared with the other apostles who had seen Christ in the flesh, (as may be gathered from chap. ii. 6, 9,) and therefore his doctrine was but false. Upon which occasion, the apostle writeth unto them this epistle: wherein his scope is to convince those Galatians of their errors; to reduce them to the right way; to confirm them in the truth, and to press upon them the duties of a holy life, chap. iii. and iv. &c. which he laboureth to effectuate (after prefacing, to ver. 6, chap. i.): First, by asserting the truth of the gospel preached by him, and the authority of his own apostleship, to ver. 15, of chap. ii. Secondly, by vindicating the true doctrine of justification by faith, and of the temporary use and abrogation of the Levitical law, and of the whole legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, to the end of chap. iv. Thirdly, by instructing them in the right use of Christian liberty, having exhorted them to stand to it, and pointing out, and pressing upon them the exercise of several Christian virtues, to ver. 11 of chap. vi.; from whence he concludeth the epistle, to the end of chap. vi.

CHAPTER I.

In the first part of this chapter, is the preface to the whole epistle, containing the party who did write it, ver. 1, 2; the party to whom it was

written, ver. 2; the salutation, ver. 3; a description of Jesus Christ from the work of redemption, ver. 4; and a thanksgiving to God for this work, ver. 5.

In the second part, he reproveth the Galatians for their defection from the gospel, ver. 6, to errors which did overturn it, ver. 7.

In the third part, that he may justify this reproof, he asserteth the divine authority of the gospel preached by him, First, by cursing those who should hold out another gospel, differing from it, ver. 8, 9. Secondly, from the scope of his doctrine, and his aim in preaching it, ver. 10. Thirdly, because both the first saving knowledge which he had of the gospel, and his office to preach it, were immediately from God, and not from men, whether apostles or any other, ver. 11, 12, whereof he giveth several evidences; as first, that ever until the instant of his conversion, he was a learned, but persecuting Pharisee, ver. 13, 14. Secondly, that being miraculously converted and called, he went presently with no small pains and hazard to discharge his apostolic office, without instruction or authority received from any apostle, ver. 15—17. Thirdly, that after three years he went to Peter, but not to be informed by him, or to receive ordination from him, or from any other apostle, ver. 18, 19. The truth of all which history he confirmeth by an oath, ver. 20. Fourthly, that he preached as an apostle in Syria and Cilicia, with the approbation of the Christian Jews, whom formerly he had persecuted, ver. 21—24.

VER. 1. Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;

2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

In these two verses is the inscription of the epistle, holding forth, 1. Who did write it, to wit, Paul, described from his office, and his call to that office, which were both wholly divine, as being immediately from God, ver. 1. "And the brethren with him;" such were eminent professors, but especially public preachers, who then were with Paul, and did give their testimony to those truths contained in this epistle, though they

were not the immediate penmen of the Holy Ghost in it, as Paul was. 2. To whom the epistle was written, ver. 2.

From ver. 1, learn, 1. Free-grace doth often light upon the most unworthy, not only by giving grace and salvation to themselves, but also making them sometimes instrumental for the kingdom of Christ, and for bringing about the salvation of others: for Paul, once a wicked persecutor, 1 Tim. i. 13, is now made an eminent apostle; "Paul an apostle."

2. Faithful and called ministers of Jesus Christ, are to be so far from cowardly ceding, or heartless fainting under the bold, bitter, and unjust aspersions of those who would labour to question their calling, and thereby weaken their authority, and render the truth of their doctrine doubtful, Matt. xxi. 23, that they ought so much the more, for the credit of their office, Rom. xi. 13, and for the truth's sake which they preach, 1 Cor. vii. 25, avow their calling against all who do question it. Thus Paul, writing to these Galatians amongst whom, by means of the false apostles, his authority was questioned more than in any other church, chap. ii. 6, 9, &c. expresseth himself more largely in avowing his call to the apostolic office, than in any other epistle: not only affirming that he was called by Jesus Christ, and God the Father; but also denying that he was an apostle of men, or by man.

3. The apostolic office had this common to it with all other church-offices, whether ordinary or extraordinary, Eph. iv. 11, that it was not the invention of man, or founded upon authority merely human, but was instituted by Jesus Christ, to whom only it appertaineth to appoint office-bearers in his house, 1 Cor. xii. 28, for which respect, Paul affirmeth he was an apostle not of man, as the ambassadors and officers of princes and states are: ministers are ambassadors for Christ, representing him, and having their authority from him, 2 Cor. v. 20.

4. The office of an apostle had this peculiar unto itself, that the designation of the person to undergo that office, was not mediately by the election and suffrages of men, as it is in the calling of ordinary office-bearers, Acts xiv. 23, but immediately from God; so that the function of the apostles ceased with them, and did not pass by succession to a pope or any other: for in this respect, Paul affirmeth he was an apostle, not by man, to wit, mere man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father. He was called immediately by God, Acts ix. 15.

5. That Jesus Christ is not mere man but God also, appeareth from this, that the apostle opposeth Christ to man, and so he behaved to be more than man: and this was not an angel, Heb. ii. 16, and therefore he was also God; "Neither by man," saith he, to wit, mere man, "but by Jesus Christ."

6. When Scripture ascribeth an action to the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity, as done by him, it is not to be so understood, as if the Son and Holy Ghost were excluded from having hand in that action; but that they are rather included in the Father, as persons of the same godhead: for the calling of the ministers of the gospel, which is ascribed to God the Father, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, Acts xx. 28;

and Paul, who is here said to be called by God the Father, is by the Holy Ghost separated and sent forth unto a particular employment in his calling, Acts xiii. 2, 4; and the raising of Christ from the dead, in like manner ascribed to God the Father here, is ascribed to Christ also, John x. 18, and to the Holy Ghost, Rom. viii. 11. "And God the Father, who raised him from the dead." All the external actions of the Godhead towards the creatures, are common to the whole Trinity, John v. 19; so that the ascribing of some actions to the Father, is not as if any of the rest were not concurring, but because of the order of working, which is among the three Persons; the Father being the first fountain of working, as doing all things from himself, 1 Cor. viii. 6; by the Son, 1 Cor. viii. 6; and Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 6, 8; because of this order, those actions which are common to the whole Trinity are frequently ascribed unto the Father.

7. As Jesus Christ who hath life in himself, John v. 26, and is the fountain of life unto others, John vi. 33, was once among the dead; so he was raised again by the power of the Father from death unto life, and is alive for evermore, Amen, Rev. i. 18, it being impossible that he should be holden by death, Acts ii. 24; and divine justice having received full satisfaction from him for all which he undertook to do or suffer, as our cautioner; John xvi. 10. "Who raised him from the dead," saith he.

8. So blinded are men usually with preposterous zeal towards their erroneous opinions, that frequently they do allege those things for to uphold them, which of all other things are most contrary unto them: thus the false apostles, that they might shake the truth preached by Paul, and establish their own contrary error, did allege that he was no lawful apostle, as for other reasons, so it would seem mainly for this; because he had not seen Christ in the flesh, 1 Cor. ix. 1; nor yet was called before his death; and that therefore his doctrine was not to be much regarded: which reason Paul doth here refute, by showing he was called by Christ, after he was raised from the dead, and had taken possession of his glorious kingdom; leaving unto them to gather, that therefore his calling had at least no less dignity and glory in it than if he had been called by Christ when he was here upon the earth, in the days of his flesh; "And God the Father, who raised him from the dead."

From ver. 2, learn, 1. The more they are whom God maketh use of to hold out the beauty of truth and holiness unto us, that we may embrace and follow it; or, the deformity and danger of error and vice, that we may fly from, hate, and abhor it; we are the more to take heed how we reject or embrace, despise or obey what is so pressed upon us; as knowing there will be the more to bear witness of our guilt, and subscribe to the equity of God's judgment against us, if we obey not, Luke ix. 5; for, Paul doth join the consent of all the brethren who were with him, unto what he writeth; that so his doctrine and reproofs might have the more weight; "And all the brethren which are with me."

2. Though the sins of a church, whether in doctrine or manners, are not to be reputed as on

sins by us, because they are connived at, or pleaded for by a church, Jer. v. 31; and though the sins of churches are to be pleaded against by private Christians in their places and stations, Hos. ii. 2, so far are they to be from following of a multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2; yet we are not so to stumble at the many sinful failings, yea, gross enormities, which may be in churches, relating either to faith or manners, as presently to unchurch them, by denying them to be a church, or to separate from them, by refusing to keep communion with them in lawful and commanded ordinances, being purely administered according to the prescript of God's word; chiefly if their error be not contrary to fundamental truths, or at least if they err of human frailty, and not obstinately or avowedly. For the churches of Galatia had made a grievous revolt, even from a fundamental truth, ver. 6, and chap. iii. 1, and yet, because they were rather through frailty seduced by others, than active seducers of others, therefore he useth much meekness and moderation towards them, allowing them the name of churches, and exercising his apostolic care towards them as a part of his charge, and thereby keeping communion with them, as with churches which were sickly and under cure; "Unto the churches of Galatia:" which truth makes nothing against our separation from the Church of Rome, as being after much pains taken in order to their reclaiming, and not until we were driven to it by persecution; besides that the Romish Church had erred in the foundation obstinately and avowedly.

VER. 3. Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Here is the salutation, wherein he wisheth unto them God's gracious favour and good-will, whereby he is well pleased with the elect, in and for Christ, Rom. iii. 24; and peace, that is, first, peace of conscience, and with God, Rom. v. 1; Secondly, peace with the creatures, as with the angels, Col. i. 20; with the godly, Isa. xi. 9; with ourselves, all within us being conformed to the rule of the renewed mind, Rom. viii. 1; and in some respect with our enemies, Prov. xvi. 7; and with the beasts of the field, Hos. ii. 18. Thirdly, prosperity and good success, Ps. cxxii. 7. All which he seeketh from God the Father as the fountain of grace, and from Jesus Christ as the conduit or pipe to convey grace from the Father unto us. John i. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. God's gracious favour and good-will is to be sought by us in the first place, whether for ourselves, Ps. iv. 6, or others: that being a most discriminating mercy betwixt the godly and the wicked, Eph. i. 6; and a mercy which of any other bringeth manifold mercies along with it. Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Yea, all things are mercy to a man who hath obtained that mercy, Rom. viii. 28; for, the apostle wisheth for grace unto them first; "Grace and peace."

2. Peace also is to be sought, even peace with God, peace with the creatures, together with prosperity and good success; but withal, peace is

to be sought after grace, and not to be expected before it. Peace without grace, is no peace: there can be no peace with God, no sanctified peace with the creatures, nor sanctified prosperity or success to our undertakings, except through Jesus Christ we lay hold on God's favour and grace; yea, "there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." Isa. lvii. 21. Thus the apostle wisheth unto them also peace, but so as it flow from grace; "grace and peace."

3. Grace and peace are such, as we cannot acquire unto ourselves by our own industry or pains: they come from God, are to be sought from him, and his blessing is more to be depended upon for attaining of any thing which cometh under the compass of grace and peace, than our own wisdom, industry, or diligence; so Paul seeketh "Grace and peace from God the Father."

4. Whatever favour we seek from God, we are to seek it also from Jesus Christ as mediator: for he hath purchased it, Eph. i. 7. He is appointed Lord of his own purchase to bestow all, Acts v. 31, and there is no coming to, or trysting [meeting] with the Father, but in him. John xiv. 6. Thus Paul seeketh "Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ."

5. They to whom grace and peace belong, are such as acknowledge Christ for their Lord to command and rule them, and do yield subjection to him in their heart and life: for, while the apostle wisheth grace and peace to them, he doth lead them to thoughts of Christ's sovereignty. he himself taking him up as Lord. and holding him forth so unto others; "From our Lord Jesus Christ."

VER. 4. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

The apostle (having but mentioned Christ, ver. 3, that he may in the very entry draw the minds of these Galatians from off their errors and superstitions to embrace him, as one in whom is fullness of sufficiency for the redemption and justification of lost sinners) doth describe him from one eminent action of his, whereby, as the great High-priest over the house of God, Heb. x. 21, he did offer up himself, Isa. lv. 10, soul and body, Heb. ii. 14, by death upon the cross, John xix. 17, 18, that he might expiate and take away, John i. 29, the sins of the elect, John xvii. 9, and that hereby he might deliver them from this "present evil world," or from the sin, misery, and cruelty of wicked men in the world, who get the name of world, 1 John v. 19; and all this he did in obedience to his Father's will, who had fore-ordained this to be the only way of bringing lost sinners to heaven, Heb. x. 8, 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. The lively impression of Christ's worth and excellency, doth ordinarily so fill the hearts of those who know him, and have tasted how gracious he is, as there will be a readiness, upon any occasion of mentioning him, to break forth in his commendation; for such is the constraining power of love on Paul's heart, that usually he doth not so much as make mention of him, but

presently he must extol, and at large commend him; so doth he in this verse, "Who gave himself," &c., which his attainment should be our aim; and his practice our copy, 1 Cor. ii. 1.

2. The well-grounded knowledge of what Christ is to us, and hath done for us, together with the frequent remembrance of it, is a sovereign antidote against all those errors and superstitions, which tend to draw us from Christ, either in part, or in whole; and that, both to prevent them, and to purge us from them: he is that Sun of righteousness, Mal. iv. 2, the arising whereof doth easily dispel and scatter all those fogs and mists, Acts xix. 18—20; for Paul, in order to this end, doth in the very entry hold forth what Christ had done for them; "Who gave himself," &c. saith he.

3. So deep and deadly was the guilt of sin, Gal. iii. 10, so exact was the justice of God, and so unalterable was his faithfulness in executing the judgment which was denounced for sin, Gen. ii. 17, that there was no delivery to the elect from it, without the payment of a ransom and satisfaction for the wrong done by sin to the provoked justice of God; for, "Christ gave himself for our sins," that is, a propitiation for them, 1 John ii. 2, and to cleanse us from them, 1 John i. 7.

4. Nothing less could be a satisfying ransom to the Father's justice, than the offering up of Jesus Christ, the holy, harmless, and spotless lamb of God, both in soul and body, as a sacrifice, by death upon the cross. The wrong was infinite, Gen. xxxix. 9, and so must the price be, even no less than the blood of God; "Who gave himself for our sins," Acts xx. 28.

5. Such was the desire which Jesus Christ had to the salvation of lost sinners, Prov. viii. 31, such was his care to perform what he had undertaken to the Father, and what was foretold of him in Scripture, Psa. xl. 7, 8, that willingly, and of his own accord, without any constraint except that of love, John xv. 13, he did offer up himself a sacrifice to satisfy provoked justice; for, "He gave himself for our sins," saith Paul.

6. They for whom Christ did give himself upon the cross, are also delivered by him from this present evil world; which Christ doth not by taking them presently out of this world by death, or otherwise, John xvii. 15; but, first, by renewing their natures, and so separating them from the condition of unregenerate men, who are called the world, 1 John v. 19. And, secondly, by guarding them against those baits and snares of sinful temptations, which are mainly prevalent in the men of this world, 1 John ii. 16. Thirdly, by defending them, so far as he seeth conducing for his own glory, Psa. lxxvi. 10, and their good, Psa. lxxxiv. 11, from the malicious cruelty of wicked men of this world, Psa. cv. 14. And, lastly, by taking them at the close of their time, 2 Cor. v. 1, from earth to heaven, that they may be for ever with himself; for, "He gave himself, that he might deliver us from this present world," John xiv. 3.

7. So much do wickedness and wicked men abound in the world, Gen. vi. 5, so many are the snares and temptations to sin and wickedness, which are in it, 1 John ii. 16, so many also are

the crosses and calamities which godly men may resolve to meet with while they are in the world, Psa. xxxiv. 19, that though the world, simply in itself, and as it speaketh our duration and abode in this life, all the days of our appointed time, be not evil, but distinguished from evil, John xvii. 15, yet for those causes, and in those respects, the present world is an evil world; for so it is here called.

8. That any of lost mankind, in whom by nature sin doth reign, should have their natures renewed, the power of sin in them mortified, and so themselves delivered from this present evil world, it was necessary that Christ should offer up himself; for, as life eternal, so also God's image and holiness was forfeited by Adam's fall unto all his posterity, 1 Cor. xv. 21, and so beloved to be purchased by Christ's death before ever we could attain unto it, Heb. ix. 14; for, saith the apostle, "He gave himself, that we might be delivered from this present evil world."

9. This evil world, wherein so much wickedness, so much misery, and so many wicked men abound, is but "present," not lasting; transient, not continuing; it is hastening to its end, Rom. viii. 19, and at last shall be consumed with fire, 2 Pet. iii. 10, and a new world, new heavens, and a new earth, are to succeed unto it, wherein shall dwell righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 13; for he calleth this a "present world," importing that there is another to come.

10. That Jesus Christ did offer up himself in satisfaction to provoked justice for the sins of the elect, was a thing decreed and appointed by the Father; which, as it speaketh the Father's unspeakable love unto lost sinners, John iii. 16, so it sheweth the ground whereupon the satisfaction given by Christ, is accepted for those who by faith lay hold on him, John vi. 39, 40; it was so transacted betwixt the Father and the Son, even that he should give himself for our sins, according to the will of God, to wit, the Father; for when God is opposed to Christ, then God signifieth the Father: yet so, as the other two persons of the Godhead are not excluded, as is noted upon ver. 1, Doctr. 6.

11. By reason of this satisfaction given by Jesus Christ to provoked justice for our sins, God, who was before a consuming fire to sinners, Heb. xii. 29, a strict sin-pursuing judge, Exod. xxxiv. 7, becometh now our Father; for justice being satisfied, and that satisfaction laid hold upon by faith, Rom. v. 1, the enmity ceaseth, and we become children; yea, heirs and joint-heirs with Christ, having received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father," Rom. vii. 15—17. This is imported while it is said, "According to the will of God and our Father."

VER. 5. To whom *be* glory for ever and ever, Amen.

Here is the close of the salutation; in which, by holding forth his own practice for an example, he comprehendeth the duty of the redeemed: they are to ascribe lasting glory and praise to God the Father, for his good-will to this work of our redemption by Jesus Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. As God, in this great work of our redemption by Jesus Christ, hath made the glory of almost all his attributes, especially of his justice, as to Christ, Rom. viii. 32, of his mercy, as to us, Eph. i. 7, and consequently of his infinite wisdom, 1 Tim. i. 17, to kyth [to be discovered] and shine forth: so it is the duty of the redeemed, and such a duty as useth willingly to flow from the very making mention of that so excellent a work, in a heart duly affected with the worth thereof, even to acknowledge that glory of his which is manifested therein, and to wish that his glory may be set forth more and more, both by ourselves and others; and this not only by speaking to the commendation of his glory and greatness, Psa. cxlv. 5, 6, but by making our whole life and conversation to be nothing else but a testimony of our thankfulness to him, 2 Cor. v. 15, for the apostle having mentioned that great work, ascribeth glory to God, as God's due, and his own duty; "To whom be glory."

2. This duty of ascribing glory to God for the great and excellent work of our redemption, is such that it can never be sufficiently discharged; there is no less required than a succession of ages to ages; yea, and eternity's leisure to ascribe glory to God; for so much is imported while he saith, "To whom be glory for ever and ever."

3. The glory of the Redeemer, and of God who sent his Son to do that work, shall be the long-lasting and never-ending song of the redeemed ones through millions of imaginable ages, even to all eternity: so much doth the word rendered "for ever and ever," bear: for it significth to ages of ages, or innumerable ages.

4. Our praise and thanksgiving to God, must not be formal or verbal only, Matt. xv. 8, but ought to be fervent and serious, as proceeding from the most intimate affection of the heart, Luke i. 46, 47, signified by the word "Amen," that is, "Let it be so;" an earnest wish.

VER. 6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel:

In the second part of the chapter, that the apostle may reclaim those Galatians from their errors, he falleth upon them with a sad, though most gentle reproof; wherein, by way of admiration at their inconstancy, he chargeth them with the sin of suffering themselves to be so easily and so soon seduced by their false teachers from the truth, which they had once embraced: whereof he mentioneth three dangerous consequences. First, That hereby they had made defection from God, who called them; and consequently were ungrateful, as walking unworthy of their heavenly calling, Eph. iv. 1. Secondly, That herein they had deserted the doctrine of free grace through Jesus Christ, without which they could not be saved, Eph. ii. 8. And thirdly, They had embraced another gospel and way of salvation, held forth by the false apostles, concerning which he declareth his judgment in the following verse.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christ's ministers, not only to hold out the pure and sincere truth of the gospel unto the people of their charge, Acts xx. 27, but also to defend it, by convincing of gain-sayers, and by reproofing those sadly [solidly], who are carried away with contrary errors; for so doth the apostle here reprove those Galatians. "I marvel, that ye are so soon removed."

2. The ministers of Jesus Christ are, in all their reproofs, chiefly against such who are carried away with the spirit of error, and are not incorrigible in their error, to use much moderation and meekness, eschewing all sharpness of speech, at least until pains be taken to inform their judgment; and this, lest the evil which they intend to cure, be otherwise made worse; for although Paul intend afterwards, chap. iii. ver. 1, (having once confirmed his doctrine from Scripture,) to rebuke them most sharply, yet he doth not here, at the first entry, in an upbraiding way shame them, but using much moderation and meekness, with admiration and grief, maketh mention of their levity unto them; and this, because many of them at least were not yet incorrigible, chap. v. 10: "I marvel," &c. saith he.

3. They are also, in all their reproofs, to use much wariness and circumspection, not omitting any circumstance which may justly extenuate the sin reproved, or furnish with any ground of hope concerning the amendment of him who is reproved; for hereby the bitter potion of a medicinal reproof is much sweetened, and the guilty patient allured to the more thorough receiving of it: Paul useth this circumspection, while he saith, not ye of yourselves do remove to another gospel, but ye are removed passively; thereby laying the chief part of the blame upon others; and while he speaketh of them in the present time, not that they were already removed, but as being in the act of removing, so that their case was not desperate; "I marvel, that ye are removed." In the original, it is a word of the present time.

4. The most quick-sighted of Christ's ministers may be much deceived and disappointed in their expectation of good things from some eminent professors, (for in charity they are obliged to hope the best of all, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, in whom the contrary doth not appear, Tit. i. 16,) and so may readily fall short of their hope, as Paul sheweth he did, while he saith, "I marvel that ye are removed;" importing that their defection had fallen forth beyond his expectation; for at such things men use to marvel, Mark xv. 44.

5. The servants of Jesus Christ are not, under the pretence of wariness and circumspection in reproofing, to omit any circumstance which may deservedly aggravate [aggravate] the sin reproved, whereby the guilt may be charged home with greater weight upon the sinner's conscience, 2 Sam. xii. 7: prudence and faithful freedom may well consist, Matt. x. 16. Thus Paul heapeth together several things, whereby their apostasy was aggravated, as that it was sudden, a turning from God, and to another gospel; "I marvel that ye are so soon removed," &c.

6. How great need have they who stand, to take heed lest they fall, 1 Cor. x. 12, seeing such is man's inconstancy, especially in the matter of religion; that they who are flourishing professors of saving truths now, may, upon a sudden, and with very little ado, be carried away to soul destroying errors before it be long; for such were those errors unto which the Galatians were removed, chap. v. 2, and that so soon, either after their first conversion, or after the time when they were first assaulted by the false apostles, which doth not militate against the doctrine of perseverance, seeing Paul speaketh to the whole visible church, among whom some had never saving grace; and for the few truly gracious which were among them, there is nothing here to prove that their falling away was either total or final.

7. This aggregeth the sin of any person not a little, when he doth suddenly, without difficulty or resistance, and with ease, succumb and yield unto the temptation; for hereby is their defection aggregated, even that they were "so soon removed;" they did not long resist the temptation.

8. Though active seducers of others from truth be more inexcusable than simple creatures that are seduced by them, Rom. xvi. 18, yet, even those of the latter sort are not altogether free of guilt; when the blind do lead the blind, both fall together in the ditch: for herein were these Galatians guilty, that they did suffer themselves to be seduced, or "so soon removed from him that called them."

9. As the dangerous consequences which follow upon error ought to be presented unto people, that thereby they may be made the more to fly from it, so there are some errors in doctrine, which do no less separate the person erring from God and interest in free grace, than profanity of life doth, of which errors this is one, the maintaining of justification by works; for Paul sheweth that, by this error, "they were removed from God, who had called them, and from the grace of Christ."

10. As the inward effectual calling of sinners from the state of nature unto grace, is the work of God, which he bringeth about by the preaching of his word, 1 Cor. i. 21, yea, and the external calling of men from idols, to be members of the visible church, which is attended with professed subjection upon his part, who is called, unto God's laws and ordinances, is his work also though in an inferior degree and respect; so it is no small aggravation of sin or error in any person, when it is evidently inconsistent with, or reflecting upon, that state unto which he is called; for Paul describeth God here as elsewhere, chap. v. 8, from his calling of them, and chooseth to describe him so, while he is speaking of their defection; that hereby he may aggregate it, as reflecting so much upon their calling; "From him that called you."

11. The gospel is a doctrine which holdeth forth much of Christ's free grace and good-will to sinners, and specially in this, that heaven and salvation, though purchased at a dear rate by Christ, John iii. 16, is notwithstanding freely offered unto all, Rev. xxii. 17, and really to be bestowed upon all who do but come to him, John

v. 40, and by saving faith lay hold upon him, John iii. 36; for God's calling them to receive the doctrine of the gospel, is here termed his "calling them unto the grace of Christ."

12. It is ordinary for seducers, and those that are acted by a seducing spirit, to usher in their errors by some excellent designations, as of new lights, a more pure gospel way, and what not; as here they design their error by the name of another gospel; and this doubtless, as they would have had the people believe, a more excellent gospel than what Paul had preached; for Paul, in imitation of the false apostles, calleth their errors "another gospel."

VER. 7. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

The apostle taketh away that excellent title from the error of the false apostles, whereby themselves did design it, and denieth it to be a gospel at all; yea, and to be any other thing but the invention of men, whereby they troubled the churches' peace, and laboured to overturn and corrupt the doctrine of the gospel.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the part of Christ's ministers to undeceive a seduced people, by taking off the veil of fair pretences, wherewith error useth to be covered, and so made the more taking, and to set it forth in its vilest colours, that people may loathe it: for, Paul doth take the name of gospel from this error, declaring it to be nothing else but a perverting of the gospel; which is not another.

2. There is but one gospel, one in number, and no more; and but one way to salvation held out in the gospel, which is by faith laying hold upon the righteousness of Christ, John iii. 16. Whatever doctrine holdeth forth any other way to salvation than this, it is no gospel, no glad tidings of salvation, but a perverting of the gospel: for so doth Paul affirm of the doctrine taught by the false apostles; "Which is not another," &c.

3. The proper effect of error is, to trouble the churches' peace; first, their outward peace among themselves, the patrons of error being zealous of nothing so much as to gain many followers, Matt. xxiii. 15; for attaining whereof, they scruple not much to make woeful rents and deplorable schisms within the church, Rom. xvi. 17. Secondly, their inward peace of conscience, while some are thereby rendered first perplexed, and anxious what to choose, or what to refuse, and at last are made to question all truth, 1 Cor. xv. 32, and others to embrace error for truth, and so to ground their peace upon an unsure foundation, which can give no solid peace, no not in the mean time; and whatever false peace is thereby offered, it will afterwards end in trouble, Jude 13. Hence it is said here of the false apostles by Paul, "There be some that trouble you," to wit, by their errors. The scripture use of the word is, mainly, to signify inward trouble, anxiety, fear, and perplexity of mind, Matt. ii. 3; xiv. 26.

The word seemeth to be borrowed from the troubling of waters, John v. 4, 7, which usually cometh to pass by great winds, Jonah i. 7, and applied to the troubling of the Galatians by the winds of erroneous doctrine. Eph. iv. 14.

4. Then is usually the design of Satan, and of his instruments, against truth, most dangerous, and so most to be watched against and feared, Matt. vii. 15, when they speak fairest, and endeavour to palliate their errors with specious pretences: for here, when they pretend to no less than the holding out of a more excellent gospel than Paul's, ver. 6, they endeavour even to pervert and overturn the gospel of Christ.

5. However people who are in hazard of seduction, or already seduced unto error, are to be tendered, and by all means fervently to be laboured with, in order to their confirmation or recovery, Jude 22, 23; yet their obdured leaders and desperate seducers, are not much to be taken notice of: Paul thinketh such unworthy, whom he should once name; "But there be some that trouble you."

6. The doctrine which maintaineth that justification and salvation are obtained partly by Christ, and partly by the merit of good works, is a perverting and total overturning of the gospel, in so far as it contradicteth the main scope of the gospel, which is to hold out and exalt Christ as our complete Saviour, Mediator, and Ransom, and not in part only, Eph. ii. 7—9. 1 John i. 7. Hence the false apostles, while they press justification by works, as appeareth from the tenor of the following dispute, are said to "pervert the gospel of Christ."

VER. 8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

In the third part of the chapter, the apostle, that he may justify his former reproof, asserteth the divine authority of that gospel which he had preached unto them. And first, by denouncing the terrible curse of eternal separation from Christ against those who should corrupt that doctrine by preaching another way of salvation, differing from it. The certainty of which denunciation he confirmeth from the supposition of an impossible case, that if either he himself, or the other apostles with him, yea, or if an angel from heaven should teach otherwise, they were not to be exempted from this curse; and therefore much less should there be exemption for others.

DOCTRINES.

1. The written word of God, without the help of unwritten traditions, containeth in it all truths necessary for bringing about the salvation of those who yield themselves to be instructed by it: for the written word comprehendeth the sum and substance of all that Paul preached or believed, Acts xxiv. 14, and no doctrine, differing from what he had preached, was to be taught under the hazard of a curse, which could

not be, except he had preached all necessary truths: let him be accursed, saith he, who preacheth any other gospel.

2. Whatever doctrine is propounded unto the church, as a part of God's word and necessary to salvation, if it be diverse and differing from, or besides the written word, though it be not directly contrary unto it, it is a cursed doctrine, and the authors thereof accursed. The ambassador who speaketh any thing beside his commission, is as well in a fault as he who speaketh the contrary, though not so much: for, saith the apostle, "If we preach unto you any other doctrine than that (the word signifieth besides that we have preached unto you) let us be accursed."

3. So assured ought ministers to be of the truth of what they hold forth as the way to life and salvation, that nothing imaginable, no, not the authority of an angel from heaven, may prevail to brangle [dispute with] them in their believing of it; yea, and that knowingly and with confidence they may be able to denounce the curse of God against those who would dare to hold out another way of salvation contrary unto it: for so doth Paul: "If an angel preach besides what we have preached, let him be accursed."

4. The ministers of Jesus Christ ought to be faithful unto the souls of those over whom they are set, by declaring the whole counsel of God unto them, Acts xx. 27, and keeping up no truth necessary for salvation from them: for Paul was thus faithful to the Galatians, else he could not denounce those accursed who would preach any thing, to wit, as necessary to salvation, even besides that which he had preached unto them, as he doth here.

5. So much of glory to God's justice and mercy is manifested in the doctrine of the gospel, Eph. i. 6, 7, 12, the keeping of this doctrine pure and uncorrupt is so necessary for the salvation of sinners, 1 Tim. iv. 16, the perverting of this doctrine by adding any thing of man's inventions to it, is so dishonourable to God, whose wisdom is hereby taxed as defective; so destructive to the doctrine of the gospel itself, ver. 7, and so perniciously poisonable to the souls of people, Acts xv. 24, that they who are guilty of this sin, and labour to seduce others to embrace their pernicious errors, are liable to the terrible curse of eternal separation from Christ, and ought to be pronounced such judicially by the church, Tit. iii. 10. "Let him be accursed," or, let him be anathema, which was one kind of that dreadful sentence of excommunication, as it was used with the Jews; and the word signifieth that which is put apart from the use of man, and dedicated unto God, with the accursing of them who should convert it to their own use; and so, by a translated sense, it signifieth eternal separation from Christ, Rom. ix. 3. 1 Cor. xvi. 21.

6. The more impartial the ministers of Christ be in reproving of sin, and denouncing of threatenings against all, without exception, who are guilty of the sin threatened, the word of reproof and threatening will have the more weight from their mouth; and when the word is dispensed with evident respect to persons, so that the faults

of some are sharply rebuked, when the sins of others equally guilty for by-respects are wholly connived at, usually no person careth for it: therefore, Paul, that the judgment denounced may have the more weight with others, exempteth not himself, if so he should be found guilty of the sin against which he threateneth, "Though," saith he, "even I Paul," or any other of the apostles, "preach any other doctrine," &c.

7. As people when they discern any excellences or perfections, whether in gifts or graces, in ministers, are ready to take upon trust whatever they deliver; so nothing of that kind should make faith to what they preach, if it be not founded upon the word of truth: the first of these is supposed, the other more directly expressed, while he saith, "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed."

8. The authority of the gospel and written word, is far above the authority of the most trustworthy men; yea, and of the glorified angels: so that neither man nor angel, church or any other, can add any authority to it, as though without the testimony of those it had not sufficient authority in itself, 2 Pet. i. 19, and from God the author of it, 2 Tim. iii. 16, to give faith unto it; neither can they detract any thing from its authority, though they should all in one voice contradict it, as it appeareth from this impossible case, supposed by the apostle; "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be accursed."

VER. 9. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

That the apostle may show what he spoke proceeded neither from rage nor rashness, he doth again denounce the former terrible curse more generally against all whomsoever guilty of the forementioned sin.

DOCTRINES.

1. Such is the incapacity of men's minds to understand the things of God, Eph. iv. 18; the imbecility and weakness of their memories to retain and carefully keep, Heb. ii. 1; yea, such is the deadness, slowness, and averseness of the will and affections, from embracing and giving entertainment to saving truths at first when they are offered, Zech. vii. 11; that weighty and necessary truths are not only once but frequently to be inculcated by faithful ministers, especially fundamental truths, Phil. iii. 1; and of daily use and practice, 2 Pet. i. 12; which frequent inculcating of one and the same thing, must flow not from laziness, occasioning vain and idle repetitions, condemned Matt. vi. 7, but from the zeal of God, respect to and compassion of, the people's necessity; for Paul doth inculcate and again repeat this necessary and fundamental truth, that the doctrine of the apostles, and by consequence their writings, 1 John i. 1, have divine authority, and are thoroughly sufficient to salvation, without any mixture of human

traditions added to them: "As I said before, so say I now again."

2. Though zeal for God and truth, with fervency in the delivery of truth, chiefly in the reproof of sin, Isa. lviii. 1, be required in a minister, yet he is carefully to guard, lest, under pretence of zeal, he vent his inconsiderate and fleshly passions, or lest he give any ground for people to conceive so of him: for Paul guardeth against this, by repeating advisedly what he had presently spoken; "As I said before, so say I now again."

3. It is not enough for the salvation of people's souls, to have the gospel preached in purity among them, except it be also received by them, as labouring to understand the purpose of it, Acts viii. 30; giving assent unto the truth of it in their understanding, Heb. iv. 2, and embracing the good things offered by it in their heart and affections, 1 Tim. i. 15; for, whereas, (ver. 8.) Paul said they are accursed who teach otherwise than he had preached, here he saith, "they are accursed who preach otherwise than they had received;" whereby it appeareth, as Paul had preached the gospel of Christ, so the Galatians received it, to wit, the whole bulk of church members come to age, the two first ways mentioned in the doctrine, and sincere believers among them in the last way.

VER. 10. For, do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Here is a second argument, proving the divine authority of the gospel, which Paul had preached to those Galatians, taken partly from the scope of his doctrine, which was not to persuade men, that is, (by a necessary ellipsis and a construction somewhat unusual,) he did not by this doctrine persuade men to be heard and obeyed; (as the false apostles, who did always inculcate the authority of men upon the hearers, that hereby they might gain credit to their doctrine;) but the drift of his doctrine was to draw men to God, persuading God, that is, to be heard and obeyed; that so the faith of the hearers might rely only upon the authority of God, and not of men; partly, from the scope of the preacher, Paul himself, which was not to hunt after the favour of men; (as the false apostles did press the legal ceremonies, that they might hereby gain the applause of, and decline persecution from the Jews, Gal. vi. 12;) but his aim was, singly to approve himself to God, however men should esteem of him, 1 Cor. iv. 3; and withal, giveth a reason, inducing him to be thus single and sincere, to wit, if he should set himself to hunt after the favour of men, as he did when he was a Pharisee, he could not be an approved servant of Christ, but of those whose favour he studied to gain.

DOCTRINES.

1. The faithful servants of Jesus Christ, beside their many other sufferings, must resolve to suffer somewhat sometimes in their credit and

estimation from those who, being set on by a spirit of spite and malice, will spread sinister reports in secret of honest ministers; the truth whereof they dare not avow or publicly stand to when they are put to it, and have fair opportunity to do it if they could: for it appeareth Paul's adversaries had been secretly whispering, as if the scope of his doctrine had been to set up his own authority and testimony in the points controverted, not only above the other apostles, whom they falsely boasted of to have favoured them, (as is collected from chap. ii. 6,) but also above the authority of God speaking in the old testament, and that he was not constant to himself, sometimes disproving circumcision, and sometimes approving it, chap. v. 11, as he might best please the humours of men with whom he had to do: and Paul wipeth off these calumnies, not by a positive denial of any truth to be in them, but by interrogations and questions; which, as they serve for strong negations of the things questioned, according to the use of Scripture, 1 Sam. xii. 3; so they in a manner provoke the adversary to assert the thing questioned for truth, if he be able: for "Do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men?"

2. Though the ministers of Jesus Christ may make use of human authority as a secondary proof and testimony unto the truth, already proved to be truth from the word of God, and chiefly towards those with whom the testimony of such will have most weight, Acts xvii. 28; yet the authority and writings of men, or of any man whatsoever, are not to be rested upon as the first and main proof of any religious truth; neither are they, especially in preaching, to be always inculcated, and promiscuously, unto every sort of hearers; lest thereby the faith of people be brought to rely on the authority of men; for this is to persuade men, to wit, to be chiefly heard, as the supreme judges of religious truths, which Paul denieth to have been his practice; "Do I now persuade men?"

3. That doctrine only, the truth whereof is grounded upon divine testimony, and "Thus saith the Lord," is to be received in the church, as that which men may safely venture their eternal well-being on, 1 Cor. iii. 12—15, and which God will own for his, Acts xv. 24; for Paul proveth that the doctrine preached by him was the only true gospel of Jesus Christ, because thereby he did persuade God, to wit, to be heard and obeyed, and his authority only to be stood to, as appeareth by the causal particle, for: "For do I now persuade men, or God?" The first part of the question hath the force of a denial; the second of a vehement affirmation, as if he had said, I do not persuade men, but God.

4. It is not enough that a minister preach nothing to people but that which is the truth of God; he must also preach truth sincerely, not concealing any part of necessary truth, or misapplying truth so as that thereby he may please the sinful affections, humours, and dispositions of men, but aiming singly to approve himself to God in doing of his duty, 2 Cor. ii. 17. Thus Paul denieth that his aim in preaching was to please men: "Or do I seek to please men?"

5. As true conversion doth work a real change

in a man from what he once was in his unconverted state, 2 Cor. v. 17, so particularly in this, that where before he did prostitute his gifts and parts; yea, his very conscience to the slavery of men's sinful humours whom he conversed with, and by pleasing of whom he did expect any profit, credit, or contentment, John v. 44; he will not now abase himself, or dishonour God by doing so any more: thus was it with Paul, "For if I yet pleased men;" where he insinuateth that formerly, and while he was a Pharisee, he did please men, but he would do so no more.

6. Though the minister of Jesus Christ ought not to set himself of purpose, and without necessity, to displease men, or, by his imprudent disobliging carriage, to irritate and stir up their corruptions, (for hereby the word in his mouth should be made unsavoury unto them,) and though he ought to endeavour the pleasing of all men by eschewing any thing which may be just ground of offence to them, 2 Cor. vii. 2, by retrenching or enlarging himself in the use of his Christian liberty in things indifferent, as he may be least offensive unto them, 1 Cor. x. 32, 33, and as he may gain most upon them, 1 Cor. ix. 20—22, and by accommodating himself in his public preaching to the case, capacity, and state of all, by assigning unto every one what is competent, 1 John ii. 12, 13, and so is to please men for their good to edification, Rom. xv. 2; yet, there is a way of pleasing men, most sinful and base, especially in a minister, and which is inconsistent with fidelity in Christ's service, to wit, when he concealth any necessary truth, which he is otherwise called to deliver; lest he displease men, 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14, when his highest aim is to gain applause from men, 2 Cor. iv. 5, and generally when he is so timorously disposed, as to venture rather upon the displeasure of God, by omitting any part of his duty, than to irritate and displease the sinful humours of men, by faithfulness in the discharge of his calling, Acts iv. 10. A minister who setteth himself so to please men, and who resolveth not in these respects to meet with the displeasure of some men, cannot be a faithful servant to Jesus Christ; for a man cannot serve two masters. Matt. vi. 24. "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

7. A faithful servant of Jesus Christ will prize his acceptance with Christ, his being approved of him, and the testimony of a good conscience for fidelity in his service, more than all the favour, countenance, applause, or any advantage flowing from these, which he can receive from men; and before he hazard the loss of the former, he will rather a thousand times embrace with gladness the most certain loss of the latter: for Paul maketh this an argument why he did not seek to please men; because that hereby he should lose the approbation of Christ, "For, if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

VER. 11. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.

12. For I neither received it of man,

neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The apostle addeth a third argument, to prove the divinity of that gospel which he had preached, whereby he asserteth also his own lawful call to be an apostle, which was questioned by his adversaries, affirming (as it appeareth from his so much insisting to demonstrate the contrary from chap. i. ver. 13 to chap. ii. ver. 15) that he was no apostle, but some ordinary preacher, who had received the doctrine of the gospel at the second hand only, and having so received it, had now himself corrupted it, contrary to what was taught by the other apostles, James and Cephas, of whose authority and patrociny his adversaries did falsely boast, whereby they created a prejudice in the minds of those Galatians, both against Paul's person and his doctrine, which he wipeth off, while he prosecuteth this argument at large. And, in the first place, he propoundeth the argument as a thing known, at least which could not be contradicted, to wit, that the gospel preached by him was not "after man," ver. 11; that is, as he explaineth presently, he "neither received it of man," or, he received not his office to teach and preach the gospel from any mere man, and so was no ordinary preacher; "Neither was he taught it by man," that is, the knowledge which he had of the gospel, was not by any ordinary mean or instruction from men, and so he had it not at the second hand, but it was immediately revealed to him by Jesus Christ; and therefore behoved to be divine, ver. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the part of a faithful and prudent minister by loving and affectionate insinuations to bear himself in upon the affections of people, even though deeply prejudicate against him, so long as there is any hope of gaining them: for thus doth Paul to these Galatians, while he calleth them brethren.

2. It is the usual custom of heretics and adversaries of truth, when they have nothing to say in reason against the doctrine itself, to cast reproach upon the persons of those who preach it, and especially to question their call and authority to preach; that so they may indirectly at least reflect upon the doctrine which they preach. So do the Papists now against the ministers of the reformed churches, and so did the false apostles then against Paul, as we cleared in giving the sense of the words, and appeareth from his asserting his call to be an apostle: "It is not after men, neither received I it from man."

3. When subtle wits do thus puzzle the people of God by such diversions from the main purpose, and by arguments which do not directly strike at the truth in question; it is nevertheless the part of Christ's able and faithful ministers to take off those indirect prejudices, by showing how groundless they are; and particularly they are not only to clear the truth of the doctrine, but also their own call from God to preach that doctrine: for so doth Paul here, and to the end of the chapter: "Now I certify you, brethren," &c.

4. As none may take upon him to dispense the word of God publicly unto others, without a law-

ful call from God to do it, Rom. x. 15; so there are several sorts of callings, one, of men, and ordinary, when God calleth by the voices and consent of men, following the laws of the word, 2 Tim. ii. 2; another, of God, and extraordinary, when He doth call immediately, the call of the church not intervening, John xx. 21, for Paul doth not preach until he received the office to preach, and this not of man, in the ordinary way; and so of God extraordinarily; "For neither received I it of man," saith he.

5. They who are to teach others, are first to be taught themselves, to wit, ordinary preachers by ordinary means, whereby they may be enabled by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince gainsayers, Tit. i. 9. The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, Mal. ii. 7; for, as Paul received an office to preach the gospel; so he was taught and instructed in the gospel: "I neither received it, neither was taught it, but by revelation."

6. It was required to the office of an apostle, that the person called to it should have the infallible knowledge of the truth of the gospel, and this not wholly by the help of human means, as we do now learn knowledge at schools of learning, and by our own private study, but also and mainly by immediate inspiration from the Spirit of God: for Paul sheweth that the gospel was not taught him of man; and this he saith, not to depress human learning, and the knowledge of divine mysteries, which we attain unto by the help of learned men, and of their writings, this being the ordinary way of attaining knowledge now, 1 Tim. iv. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 2; but, that hereby he may obviate the calumny of his adversaries, who alleged he had the knowledge of the gospel by ordinary instruction from men only, and so was no apostle: "Neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;" that is, it was immediately revealed unto him by Christ.

7. And this that Christ is opposed unto man, doth point at his Deity. See ver. 1, Doctr. 5.

VER. 13. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14. And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Because the argument presently mentioned is most weighty, therefore the apostle doth at large prosecute it, and giveth in this chapter four evidences of the truth of what he asserted in it, to wit: That neither the knowledge which he had of the gospel was from human persuasion, or by ordinary means; nor yet his call to preach the gospel was from the suffrage of men, or any authority conveyed by man; but both of them were immediately from God. The first evidence, relating mainly to the first branch of the assertion, is, the hostile mind which he carried against the Christian church while he was a Pharisee, Acts xxvi. 5, in persecuting and making havoc of it,

ver. 13, together with the great measure of knowledge he had in that religion which he did then profess, and of abilities to defend it beyond many of these who were equal in age with him, and his zeal and fervour for his religion, and the worst part of it, to wit, unwritten traditions received from their fathers, without any ground in the written word of God, Matt. xv. 3, 9. All which he speaketh as of a thing publicly known, ver. 14, leaving them to gather hence, that his so sudden change, from being so zealous, so deeply engaged, and every way so able a persecutor, to embrace the Christian religion, could not flow from human persuasion, or any ordinary means, but immediately from God.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is a matter of no small difficulty, yea, and in an ordinary way almost impossible, for a man, deeply engaged in a course of error, having kythed [shown himself] active for it, and endued with ability to defend it, to be reclaimed from his error, to embrace the way of truth: for Paul maketh his so deep engagements to the Pharisaical errors, an evidence that his sudden change to Christianity did not flow from any ordinary mean, but was wrought immediately by God: "For ye have heard," &c.

2. A sincere convert will not shun to make an open and ingenuous confession of his wicked life, not omitting any thing which may tend to the just aggravation of it: and this not in a boasting or a rejoicing manner, James iv. 16, but that hereby the freedom of God's grace may be commended, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14; and that other vile sinners, in their own eyes lost, may have encouragement from God's dealing with him to believe on Christ for life everlasting, 1 Tim. i. 16; and that God's honour one way or other may be thereby brought about: for Paul doth ingenuously confess here, that "in time past he had persecuted the church of God" extremely, "and wasted it;" that he may thereby make evident that his conversion flowed from the immediate and extraordinary work of God, and so stopped the mouth of those who were adversaries to truth.

3. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were indited by the Spirit of God, and that the penmen thereof were not acted with human policy, but immediately inspired by that unerring Spirit, appeareth from this, jointly with other evidences held forth in Scripture itself, that they concealed not their own faults, but blazed them to the world when the glory of God did so require, as Paul doth here; "Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God," saith he.

4. This open and ingenuous confession of our bypast wicked life, is to be extended only unto sins already known, that hereby the public offence may be removed; but not to the making notour [notorious] of such evils as have been kept secret from the knowledge of others, the divulging whereof would but multiply scandals and stumbling blocks, Rom. ii. 24; for Paul confesseth only what they had already heard; "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past."

5. There is no particular church on earth, though never so famous for, and orthodox in, the

point of religion, who may not so far degenerate from what they once were, as that religion both for doctrine and worship may be wholly corrupt, from which those who would be saved must deliver themselves quickly, and which God will not own for his, as not being prescribed by him, but will father it on those who do profess it as their religion, and as invented by them: thus the Jews, once right in the point of religion, Hos. xi. 12, had now, in Paul's time, so far corrupted religion in the doctrine of justification, Rom. x. 3, of the Trinity, John viii. 9, of manners, or of the moral law, as if it required nothing but external obedience, Matt. v.—vii. in asserting the authority of unwritten traditions, and in worshipping God according to those, Matt. xv. 3—9, and rejecting Jesus Christ the promised Messiah, 1 Thess. ii. 15, that Paul seeth a necessity to quit that religion, calling it theirs, not God's; "My conversation in times past in the Jews' religion."

6. Crosses, afflictions, and persecutions from wicked men, are the ordinary lot of God's church and people: and this by reason of that enmity which is betwixt the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15, together with Satan's malice against the church, Gen. iii. 15, and his prevalent power over wicked men, whereby he inciteth and draweth them on by such inducements as he knoweth will be most prevalent with the different tempers of those who are acted by him, John xii. 6, compared with Matt. xxvi. 15, to be executioners of that his rage and malice, Rev. xx. 7, 8; and because of God's tolerance and permission, that thereby his church may be tried, Rev. ii. 10, every one, whether good or bad, being made to appear what really they are, Dan. xi. 32; and that by the sufferings of his people the way of truth may be made more lovely, further spread, and more embraced by others, Acts viii. 4—6, &c.; and that they may be also corrected for their bypast sins, as abused peace and prosperity, Judg. x. 6, 7, and that hereby also they may be restrained from many sins in time coming, Isa. xxvii. 9, and this either by removing the opportunity of such sins through the rod, Hos. ii. 6, or by renewing the hearts of many through sanctifying grace, a greater measure whereof is bestowed usually by God upon his people under persecution and affliction, Hos. ii. 14, 15, than at another time: thus, "Paul persecuted the church of God extremely."

7. Though the church of God, as to the inward estate thereof, which standeth in election and the fruits of saving grace flowing therefrom, cannot be utterly wasted, John x. 28, 29, neither can the outward state of the visible church be so far decayed, as that the visible church should altogether cease to be, at least in all places, Matt. xvi. 18; yet the Lord may so far give way to the rage of persecutors, for the reasons mentioned in the former doctrine, as that thereby the outward face and beauty of the visible church shall be totally marred, the members thereof being partly killed, John xvi. 2, partly scattered, Acts viii. 3, 4, the public ordinances of divine worship being altogether for a time suppressed, and the public assemblies of the church inter-

rupted, Dan. xi. 31. Thus "Paul wasted the church;" the word signifieth the devastation of lands, burning of houses, and utter depopulation of countries, which used to be accomplished by an enraged prevalent enemy; "I wasted it."

8. The church of God may expect to meet with persecution and sufferings, not only from men avowedly wicked and openly flagitious, but also from others, whose carriage is smooth, free from scandal, and in all things, according to that false way of religion which they profess, blameless: Satan laboreth most to have such engaged, and such being once engaged, are most bitter and implacable persecutors, as having some respect to conscience in other things, and being acted in this from the principles of a deluded conscience, John xvi. 2, which, of all other ties, doth most strictly bind, and most effectually drive forward to fulfil its dictates, especially in things of religious concernment; for, "Paul, who profited in the Jews' religion above his equals, and was exceedingly zealous, did persecute the church." Acts xiii. 50.

9. The life and way of some who are engaged in a false religion, may be so blameless, and, according to the dictates of their deluded conscience, so strict, as that it may be a copy unto those who profess the true religion, and a reproof to many such for their palpable negligence: so was Paul's way, while he was a Pharisee, even such as may serve for a copy unto Christians to walk by in several things; as, first, to be active in spreading the true religion in our places and stations, and bearing down of contrary errors, as he was in persecuting the Christian church; because it was opposite to the Jewish religion professed by him. Secondly, that what we do in religion, or for God, we do it not negligently, but with all our might, Eccl. ix. 10, and to the uttermost of what our power can reach, as he "did persecute the church," not lazily, but above measure, or extremely. Thirdly, that we labour to profit, advance and grow in religion, both as to the knowledge of truth contained in it, Heb. vi. 1, and practise according to those truths, 2 Pet. i. 5, as he "profited in the Jewish religion." Fourthly, that in the matter of growth, there be an holy emulation and strife with others; that we may outstrip them, as he "profited above many of his equals." Fifthly, that we be zealous for our religion, as having love to it, and to the honouring of God whether by ourselves or others according to it, Acts xv. 3, together with grief and anger when God is dishonoured and religion wronged, John ii. 15—17, as Paul was "zealous of the traditions of his fathers;" for zeal hath in it a mixture of love and anger.

10. As love to the honour of God may engage a man sometimes to speak to his own commendation; so there would be that modesty and sobriety of spirit, as it may appear he doth not speak from arrogancy or pride, and that he seeketh not his own commendation in speaking: for Paul commendeth his own diligence and abilities, that thereby he may commend free grace, which delivered him out of that state, but with great modesty: for he saith not, he profited more than all, but more than many; and not, more than his superiors, but, more than his equals, to wit, for

time and age, and those not in all the world, but of his own nation.

11. As our affections of joy, love, hatred, anger, and grief, are by nature so corrupt, Eph. ii. 3, that even the choicest of them, if they be not brought in subjection to the word by the Spirit of God, will lay forth themselves rather upon forbidden and unlawful objects, than that which is warrantable and commanded by the Lord: so our zeal and fervency of spirit, in particular, will bend itself more toward the maintenance of error, than of truth: for error is the birth of our own invention, Gal. v. 20, and hath the rise from some unmortified lust within, which it doth gratify, 2 Tim. iv. 3; so is not truth: thus Paul sheweth that his zeal tended more to maintain that part of the Jewish religion which was unwarrantable, to wit, the unwritten traditions, than all the rest of it; "And was much more zealous of the traditions of my fathers," saith he.

VER. 15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood;

17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Here is a second evidence of the truth of what he formerly asserted, ver. 11, 12, to wit, that as God in his providence had been making way, both in Paul's birth and education, for that which he had purposed to employ him in; so when it pleased God at the time of his gracious and effectual calling, ver. 15, to make Christ, and the doctrine of redemption by Christ, known unto him by extraordinary and immediate revelation, Acts ix. 4, that as an apostle, immediately called by God, ver. 1, he might publish the knowledge of Christ among the Gentiles; he was so much persuaded of his immediate call from God, that he did not debate the matter, neither with himself nor others, who might have dissuaded him from giving obedience to it, ver. 16, but immediately went about the discharging of his apostolic office, not without great hazard and pains to himself, in Arabia and Damascus, without so much as once visiting any of the apostles, ver. 17, far less went he to be instructed in the knowledge of the gospel by them, or to receive ordination unto the ministerial office from them, as his adversaries did falsely allege of him, the falsehood whereof he is here making evident.

From ver. 15, learn, 1. Such is the power of God's good pleasure, whereby he doth whatsoever he willett in heaven and earth, Psa. cxxxv. 6, that the will of man, though never so deeply engaged in the course of sin and wickedness, cannot resist it, but most willingly doth yield unto it, whenever the Lord thinketh fit to let forth that his good pleasure in its gracious and powerful effects of drawing a sinner out of nature to the state of grace, as it appeareth from

the adversative particle, but, whereby the apostle opposeth God's pleasure to his own former wickedness, as prevailing over it; "But when it pleased God," &c.

2. The fountain cause of man's salvation, and of all things tending to it, especially of his effectual calling, and of that whereby he is made first to differ from another, is, God's good pleasure, and nothing present, Eph. ii. 1, or foreseen to be, Rom. ix. 11, in the person who is called: for the apostle ascribeth all of that kind in himself, to the pleasure of God; "But when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me."

3. The disposing of events, or of things which shall fall out, together with the time when they shall fall out, are wholly ordered by God's will and pleasure: for this pleasure of his circumscribeth even the time of Paul's calling; "But when it pleased God, then," and neither sooner nor later, "was Christ revealed to him."

4. The Lord, by his working in us, and particular acts of providence towards us, is often making way for some hid design and purpose of his about us, which for the time we are ignorant of, but when it appeareth by the event, a wonderful contexture of providences making way for it, and tending to it, is also manifested with it: thus, "The Lord had separated Paul from the mother's womb, to preach the gospel among the Gentiles;" whereby is meant, that God was, without Paul's knowledge, preparing him for that office, by his providence about him from his very birth, as, that he was born of such parents, with such a bodily temper, fitted, as it would appear, to endure much travel and hardships, that he was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, that he was a Pharisee, instructed in all human and divine learning according to the law, &c.

5. The effectual calling of the elect in time, whereby they are drawn to Jesus Christ, John vi. 44, and enabled to embrace him as he is offered, 1 Tim. i. 15, their minds being savingly illuminated, Acts xxvi. 18, and their wills renewed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, is, the work of God's almighty power and grace; in the first instant of which work, man doth only receive the impression from grace, and hath no active influence in it, Eph. ii. 5. This doth Paul assert, while he saith, "God called me by his grace."

From ver. 16, learn, 1. However man, by the light of nature, Rom. ii. 14, 15, and by the works of creation, Rom. i. 19, 20; and providence, Psal. xix. 1, may attain to know there is a God, and that this God should be served, Acts xvii. 23, and will be terrible to those who serve him not, Rom. i. 32; yet the knowledge of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and of redemption purchased to lost sinners through him, is a thing which the greatest wits, by the forementioned helps, cannot reach, except it be revealed unto them, either by an ordinary or extraordinary revelation: for even Paul had this knowledge by revelation; "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me."

2. As there is an ordinary way of revealing Christ to souls, to wit, by the word preached, Rom. x. 17, and God's blessing upon the word, 1 Cor. iii. 7; so there is another extraordinary, without the word preached, whether by voice,

instinct, or apparition: this latter way was Christ revealed to Paul, as appeareth not only from the history of his conversion, Acts ix. and xxii., but also from the expression here used, "to reveal his Son," not "to," but "in me;" whereby, as some conceive, is signified, that the grace and knowledge of Christ did from heaven immediately break in upon his soul.

3. The knowledge of Jesus Christ, which ministers especially do receive from God, is not only for themselves, but that it may be communicated by them unto others: so that the Lord doth bestow the more liberally upon them for his people's sake. (2 Cor. i. 4.) Thus, "God revealed his Son in Paul, that he might preach him among the heathen."

4. Though before Christ's coming in the flesh, the doctrine of salvation was by God's appointment confined in narrow bounds, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20, yet by Christ's death, the partition-wall was removed, and the division which was betwixt the Jews and the Gentiles quite abolished, Eph. ii. 13; so that the doctrine of salvation was to be spread among the heathen; and this, that the prophecies of the calling of the Gentiles might be fulfilled, Psal. ii. 8. Isa. ii. 2. "That I should preach him among the Gentiles," saith Paul.

5. The call of God, whether to amendment and newness of life, or to undergo any lawful office, especially an office in his house, it being once known to be his call, ought not to be shifted, but immediately and without delay obeyed, Heb. iii. 7, 8, because our life is uncertain, James iv. 14, we know not if we shall again get such an offer, Acts xiii. 46, or, though we get a new offer, yet the longer we delay, there will be the greater indisposition to embrace it, Jer. xiii. 23; for this made Paul immediately to follow the call of God; "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

6. Because flesh and blood (whether thereby be meant carnal men, friends, or any other, or our own carnal and natural reason) will furnish abundance of seeming reasons, either for questioning the reality of God's call, or for not obeying, or at least for postponing obedience to his call, chiefly when obedience to it doth carry hazard, loss, or probability of discredit with it, Matt. xvi. 22; therefore, in the things of God, and in the matter of obedience to the will of God, we are not to consult with flesh and blood, but once knowing what the will of God is, we are, without deliberation whether we shall obey or not, to put it in execution, committing all our cares and fears about the issue to God, Esth. iv. 16; for Paul "conferred not with flesh and blood:" the word signifieth to lay down our cares and difficulties, as a burden, in some friend's bosom; but he looked not on flesh and blood as a friend to be advised with in the present case.

From ver. 17, learn, 1. That extraordinary way of revelation, whereby the Lord made known his mind to the penmen of Scripture, was so infallible in itself, and so evident to those unto whom it came, to be no delusion, but the very mind of God, that they were above all doubt to the contrary, and needed not so much as to advise with the best of men in order to

their thorough confirmation about the reality of it: for Paul was so persuaded of his immediate call from God to be an apostle, and of the infallible truth of the gospel, which was revealed unto him, that he did not consult with the very apostles about it; "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me," to wit, that he might consult with them, and obtain a permission or commission from them to discharge his office; otherwise it is probable, from Acts xxii. 17, that Paul shortly after his conversion went to Jerusalem, going through it in his way to Arabia, but went not at that time to any of the apostles, being discharged by God to stay any longer there.

2. There may be more ground of hope to bring the most wild and barbarous savages to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, than a people outwardly civilized living under the drop of ordinances, and thereby inured to a form of godliness without the power thereof: for Paul being commanded to make haste out of Jerusalem, there being no hopes that his testimony would be received there, Acts xxii. 18, is sent to the wicked and savage Arabians; "But I went to Arabia."

3. The Lord maketh sometimes the first piece of public service, which he putteth his ministers upon, as hazardous, uncouth, and unsuccessful-like as any wherein he doth ever employ them afterwards: that hereby they may be taught to depend more on God's blessing, than upon any human probabilities for success to their pains, 2 Cor. i. 9, and that they may give proof of the sincerity of their obedience to the call of God, when no apparent hazard will make them repent their undertakings, Jer. xvii. 16; and withal that they may, in the first entry, receive a proof of God's fidelity in bearing them through all hazards, which they may meet with in following of his call. (2 Cor. i. 10.) Thus was it with Moses, Exod. ii. 10, &c.; so was it with Jeremiah, Jer. i. 19; and so here with Paul, whose first work, after God had called him to be an apostle, was to preach the gospel among the wicked and savage Arabians; "I went to Arabia."

4. The apostles, by their office, were not fixed or tied unto any certain charge, as ordinary ministers now are, Rev. ii. 1, 8, but their charge being the whole world, Matt. xxviii. 19, they went from place to place, as the necessities of people required, Rom. i. 11, rules of providence, Rom. xv. 20, or God by his Spirit did immediately direct, Acts xvi. 9, 10. Thus "Paul went" unto Arabia, and returned again to Damascus," near to which he was converted, Acts ix. 3, at which time of his return, did fall out that hazard wherein he was, from the Jews, mentioned Acts ix. 23, &c.; for the history sheweth it was many days after his conversion, and that immediately after his delivery from it, he went to Jerusalem and conversed familiarly with the apostles, and therefore it could not have been before his journey to Arabia, else that history should contradict Paul himself, affirming here, "that he went not up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before him."

VER. 18. Then after three years I went up to

Jerusalem, to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Here is a third evidence, to wit, that three years after his conversion he went to Jerusalem, to give a familiar, serious, and friendly visit to Peter, in token of mutual consent and agreement to one and the self-same truth, which was preached by them both, but not that he might learn the knowledge of the gospel from Peter, as his adversaries alleged: for his abode with Peter was but for fifteen days only, ver. 18. And lest any should object, that he had been taught at that time by some other apostle, he sheweth he saw no other apostle there but James, and that he did see him only, as it were, upon the by: which James was not the son of Zebedeus, who was beheaded by Herod, Acts xii. 2; but the son of Alphaeus, Matt. x. 3, who either himself, or his wife, hath been of kindred with Mary the mother of Jesus. Hence James their son is here called the Lord's brother, according to the custom of the Hebrews, who called men of the same kindred and blood, brethren. (Gen. xiii. 8.)

DOCTRINES.

1. That nothing of Peter's supposed supremacy over Paul and the rest of the apostles can be gathered from this place, as the papists do allege, appeareth from this, that Paul went first to his work before he came to Peter at all, and that his business with Peter was not to receive ordination from him, or to evidence his subjection to him, but from the respect and reverence he carried to him, to give him a friendly visit; besides that, it is the apostle's scope in a great part of this epistle, to show that he was nothing inferior to Peter, or to any other of the apostles.

2. We ought so to spend our time for diligence and faithfulness in our stations, that we may be able to give a good account how time hath been spent both for days and years: Paul giveth such an account, while he sheweth he preached three years in Arabia and Damascus, and after stayed in Jerusalem fifteen days; "Then after three years I went up and abode fifteen days."

3. It ought to be the endeavour of Christ's ministers to entertain love and familiarity one with another, as also to make their so doing evident unto others; it being most unseemly for those who preach the gospel of peace unto others to live in discord among themselves: for Paul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, as for other reasons, so that hereby he might evidence that love and harmony which was between them.

4. The Lord doth so direct the steps of those who do acknowledge him in all their ways, Prov. iii. 6, that his glory and their good is sometimes eminently brought about by some of the ordinary passages of their life, even beyond their own intention or purpose: as here Paul's deferring to go to Jerusalem for the space of three years, his abode there only fifteen days, and his seeing none of the apostles there save

Peter and James, do serve as an evidence to refute that calumny of his adversaries against his doctrine and office, and hath been ordered so of God for that end; although Paul in the mean time knew not so much, being then ignorant that ever he should meet with such a calumny.

5. As ministers may and ought to meet sometimes together, to evidence and entertain mutual love and concord, and because of that mutual inspection which they ought to have one of another; so their meetings ought neither to be so frequent, nor of so long continuance, as that thereby their flocks may suffer prejudice: for the word importeth that this was a serious visit, and about serious things, made by Paul to Peter, and yet he remained with him but a short time until he returned to his charge again; "he went to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."

VER. 20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

The apostle, having to do with adversaries, and some also amongst the seduced Galatians, who gave not much credit to his word, asserteth the truth of all he hath said, and is to say, in matter of fact, through the whole epistle, and confirmeth it by an oath, where, according to the use of Scripture elsewhere, he expresseth but one principal part of an oath, to wit, a confession of God's presence and power to witness and judge the truth, and includeth the other parts, such as our invocation of God to bear witness that we speak the truth, 2 Cor. i. 23; and imprecation, that God would be a judge to take revenge upon us if we lie, Ruth i. 17.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Spirit of God in Scripture hath not left us destitute of sufficient evidences to be found in Scripture itself, from whence the truth of it may be made out, and all atheistical doubtings to the contrary removed, among which this is one, the solemn oath of those who write it, being men otherwise godly and worthy of trust, attesting the truth thereof, and taking God to witness against their own soul, if they did lie in what they wrote; "Behold, before God, I lie not."

2. The choicest servants of Christ may be looked upon as liars, and unworthy to be trusted, even by those to whom they are sent: and yet they must not give over to preach, as knowing the word spoken by them doth still get credit from some, 2 Cor. ii. 15, and will beget trust to itself from others, whom God hath ordained to be saved, Acts xiii. 48, and for the rest, it will seal up their condemnation and make them inexcusable, 2 Cor. ii. 16; for Paul his purging of himself from lying, doth import some did suspect him for a liar, and yet he ceaseth not to take pains upon them: "I lie not."

3. It is not unlawful for Christians under the New Testament to take an oath, providing it be with these conditions: First, That the thing which we swear be truth; so was it in Paul's oath, "I lie not." Second, That there be weighty reasons for taking an oath: so was it here; the glory of God, the dignity of his apostleship, which

was questioned by his adversaries, the confirmation of the faith of those Galatians, and of all Christians, as to the truth of the things asserted, did call upon Paul to swear. Third, That we swear only by the name of God, and not by the creatures, Zeph. i. 5; seeing none but God can bear witness to the secrets of his heart who doth swear, Acts xv. 8. So did Paul; "Behold, before God."

4. That we do not swear rashly, but with great attention, preparation, and reverence; seeing an oath is a kind of invocation, 2 Cor. i. 23, and a part of divine worship, Deut. vi. 13. Thus Paul prefixeth to his oath a word of attention, "Behold! before God, I lie not."

VER. 21. Afterwards, I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia,

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ.

23. But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24. And they glorified God in me.

Followeth a fourth evidence to the truth of what he asserted, ver. 11, 12; to wit, That after he was driven from Jerusalem by persecution, Acts ix. 29, 30, he discharged his apostolic office in Syria and Cilicia, his own country, (Acts xxi. 39.) ver. 21, and this with the approbation of the Christian churches in Judea, who, although he was unknown unto them, ver. 22, and though they had heard, by fame, that he was the man who had formerly been a bloody persecutor; yet God did so bless the very report which they had of his calling to preach as an apostle, and consequently of his miraculous conversion, ver. 23, as they could not deny them to be divine, as appeared by their acknowledging of God's mercy and power manifested in them, and by their thanksgiving to God for them, ver. 24.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though not one of the apostles was universal pastor and bishop of the whole world above the rest, seeing all of them were endued with equal authority by Christ, Matt. xx. 26, 27; yet, if this illimited power were to be pleaded for unto any of them, there should be more pretence of reason for placing of it in Paul, than in Peter, or any of the rest; Paul being particularly ordained to be the apostle of the Gentiles, Acts ix. 15, and acknowledged heartily by the Jews to be so; and having actually discharged his office far and near, as in Arabia, and then in Damascus, ver. 17, and now in Syria and Cilicia, as also at Rome, Acts xxiii. 11; and having been the first planter almost of all the primitive Christian churches among the Gentiles, as appeareth from the history of the Acts, and Paul's own epistles; and all this he did by immediate authority from Jesus Christ, ver. 16, and was not sent out by Peter, as his deputy or suffragan, but in all things was his equal, chap. ii. ver. 6-8. So little ground have the papists to plead that Peter was universal pastor above all the rest, and much less, that the pope is Peter's successor in this charge: "After-

wards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia."

2. A faithful minister of Jesus Christ, will labour mainly to be known unto, and acquainted with the people of his own charge, not ingyring [obtruding] himself upon the charge of others, or labouring so much as indirectly to draw the affections of people towards himself from those who are their own pastors, and particularly intrusted with the actual charge of their souls: thus Paul was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, as not having conversed familiarly with them, though he had sometimes occasion to be among them in his frequent going to and returning from Jerusalem, and that because they were a part of Peter's charge, chap. ii. 7.

3. Immediately, or very soon after Christ's death and resurrection, the preaching of the gospel hath been marvellously blessed, in converting of numerous multitudes to Jesus Christ; yea, and more blessed than readily it hath been in any age of the church since, whereof this is one evidence, amongst many other which are in the history of the Acts and in Paul's epistles, that at this time whereof Paul writeth, which is supposed to be the fourth or fifth year after Christ's ascension, there were several Christian churches planted, with officers, and constituted according to the rule of the gospel, even in Judea, amongst that people who had hardened their hearts against the light, Matt. xiii. 15, and rejected and crucified the Lord of life, 1 Thess. ii. 15. The gospel was then new and fresh; the preachers of it unanimous among themselves, the truths insisted upon most by them, were such as did relate to faith in Christ, and repentance from dead works, and the most necessary duties of a Christian life; besides, that God's design was to bring the gospel once in credit and request with a blinded and idolatrous world at the first breaking up thereof; and therefore the preaching of it was attended with more success and a richer blessing at that time than ordinarily it hath been since: "Unto the churches in Judea."

4. Not only particular believers, but also whole visible churches, are in Christ, though in a much different way: real believers are in him savingly, so as to be freed from condemnation by him, Rom. viii. 1; being knit to him by the band of saving faith, Eph. iii. 17; and receiving the influence of saving graces from him, John vii. 38, 39. Again, visible churches are in Christ in the respects presently mentioned, only as to the better part of them, and with regard had to real believers, who always are among them; but besides this, the whole bulk of visible churches, and of visible church-members, are in Christ, so as they enjoy from him outward privileges and divine ordinances, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20; the communication of common gifts from the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. xii. 8; and some measure of divine protection more than the rest of the world, Isa. xxvii. 2, 3; and these all by virtue of their union with him; the bond whereof is the profession of his name, and of those substantial truths which relate unto him, either personally or parentally; which external union betwixt Christ and the visible church is sealed up by baptism: "The churches of Judea which were in Christ."

5. Such power hath Christ over the hearts of very enemies; so deep are his engagements to enlarge his own kingdom, Psal. ii. 9; that before means and instruments be deficient for the propagation of the gospel, he will turn the hearts of desperate enemies, and make most bitter persecutors to be eminent, lively, and painful preachers: so was it here, "He who persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

6. How patient ought the church of Christ to be under saddest persecutions, and how far from base despondency of spirit, as if her case were wholly desperate and remediless; seeing Jesus Christ at an instant can carry captive her chiefest adversaries, and make them to be her stoutest friends, as appeareth from this, "He who persecuted us, now preacheth."

7. As godless persecutors propose unto themselves no less than the total overthrow and rooting out of truth, though neither men nor devils shall be ever able to effectuate it, Matt. xvi. 18; so men may look, if they repent not, Luke xiii. 3, to be justly charged with the guilt of all that evil which once they intended, as if they had actually accomplished it, although it was without their reach so to do: for that faith, or doctrine of faith (as Tit. i. 13), which Paul at this time did preach, is said once to have been destroyed by him; because he aimed at no less, and his sin before God was no less than if he had done it; although the Lord in mercy did pardon it, 1 Tim. i. 13: "Now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

8. We ought so to look upon notable changes which do fall out, whether in particular persons or public societies, whether to the better or the worse, as that we may see somewhat of God manifested in them, either his justice or mercy, wisdom or power, some one attribute of his or other; and so as we may give a suitable return, whether of fear or joy, thankfulness or admiration, or of any other sanctified frame of spirit and holy performance, for which such a manifestation calleth: for those Christians in Judea did so look upon this notable change in Paul, as to see God's mercy and power manifested in it; and accordingly, with joy, did give God thanks: so much is imported in this, "They glorified God in me," saith he.

9. Whosoever God is pleased to make a man instrumental, whether for our own particular good, or the more public benefit of Christ's church, as we would not be ungrateful unto the instruments themselves, Judges ix. 16, &c., so neither are we to rest upon them, ascribing the praise of what they do to them, but as we would not provoke the Lord to smite them, or, at least, to make them useless to us, 1 Cor. iv. 6, we are to look unto God more than them, ascribing the praise of what they do unto him, as that which is his proper right and due: so do they ascribe to God the praise of any good which Paul did by his preaching: "They glorified God in me, or concerning me."

10. The more that God hath made it convincingly, and from clear evidences, manifest to the conscience of his people that a work is owned and approved by him, and hath drawn an ac-

knowledge from them to that purpose unto his own praise, it aggregeth [aggravateth] the sin of those the more who would afterwards question or deny that work to be his: for the apostle's scope, in part, is, to aggregate the sin of his adversaries, who denied him to be an apostle immediately sent from Jesus Christ, and that the doctrine preached by him was the truth of God; from this, that the churches in Judea were convinced of the contrary, and had acknowledged so much long since, to the praise of God, by giving glory unto him on Paul's behalf; so that those Galatians and the false apostles were guilty of obscuring the glory of God, shining forth in his conversion and office, which was already acknowledged by others: "And they glorified God in me."

CHAPTER II.

IN the first part of this chapter, the apostle addeth some further evidences, that both his office and doctrine were divine. As, first, they were such as might abide the censure of the chief apostles, ver. 1, 2. Secondly, in the main thing controverted, which was about circumcision, the other apostles did join with him, in that they were not for, but against the circumcising of Titus, ver. 3, and for a weighty reason, ver. 4, 5. Thirdly, in that meeting, which was at Jerusalem, the other apostles did find nothing for which to challenge either him or his doctrine, ver. 6; but upon the contrary, perceiving that Paul was called of God to be an apostle, ver. 7, both from that divine assistance wherewith he was accompanied, ver. 8, and from those apostolic gifts wherewith he was endued, they acknowledged both him and Barnabas for apostles, ver. 9, and all of them did part good friends; the collecting of some supply to the poor Jews among the Gentiles being recommended by the rest to Paul, ver. 10. Fourthly, he did rebuke Peter, when in his practice he declined from the doctrine taught by Paul concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law; and for any thing which appeareth to the contrary, Peter in this debate did yield to Paul, as having truth for him, to ver. 15.

In the second part, because this dispute about the ceremonial law did fly very high (the false apostles urging the observation of it, as meritorious of justification); therefore the apostle turneth the force of the dispute against justification by works, and proveth by several arguments, that we are justified by faith only: as, first, the believing Jews, who had as much reason to boast in their works as any, ver. 15, did renounce all confidence in them for justification, ver. 16. Next, he preoccupieth an objection, and sheweth that this doctrine of justification by faith without works, giveth no encouragement to sin, ver. 17, because, first, it did press the mortifying and destroying of sin, ver. 18; and, secondly, though it did free them from the law in several respects; yet not as it is the rule of an holy life, ver. 19. Yea, thirdly, it doth tie the justified person more strictly to subdue sin, and lead an holy

life, ver. 20. Lastly, he addeth a second argument, to prove that we are justified by faith only; because, if we were justified by works, free grace and Christ's death should be useless, ver. 21.

VER. 1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

The apostle, first, mentioneth another journey of his to Jerusalem, together with the time when, and the companions with whom he went, and that extraordinary instinct and command from God, which moved him to undertake that journey, ver. 1, 2; and secondly, sheweth that when he came to Jerusalem, he did privately communicate the doctrine which he had preached among the Gentiles to the most eminent of the apostles; that by their subscribing unto it, as to the same with that which themselves did preach, his by-past and future labours might have the more success, which, as it seemeth, was in hazard to be much retarded by the calumnies of his adversaries, affirming that the other apostles did not approve of the doctrine which he preached, ver. 2. So that here is a fifth evidence, that both his doctrine and office were divine; in that not only they were such as might abide the censure of the other apostles, but also that he in the course of his ministry was singularly owned and approved of by God, as being directed by immediate revelation from him.

DOCTRINES.

1. It pleaseth the Lord often, in mercy toward his church, to preserve the lives of profitable instruments for his work for a long time, notwithstanding of all the endeavours of men and devils to the contrary: for Paul, whose blood was much thirsted after, and whose hazards were so many in several places, and from several hands, 2 Cor. xi. 26, is yet preserved, in despite of all, in the free exercise of his ministry for the space at least of fourteen years together, even though the space of time here mentioned were to be reckoned from his first conversion, which yet some do reckon from the third year following, to wit, the time mentioned, "Then fourteen years after I went up," &c.; chap. i. 18.

2. It may be sometimes lawful, yea, and necessary also, for a minister to go abroad from the flock committed to his charge for a season, to wit, when and where the glory of God in defence of truth, and in removal of what may mar the edification of the Lord's people, doth call him: for Paul here taketh journey to Jerusalem, leaving the Gentiles for a season, who were his own more proper charge, Acts ix. 15; that his consent in doctrine with the other apostles might be made evident, and so the edification of those to whom he did preach more advanced: "I went up to Jerusalem," saith he, and that "lest I

should run in vain." Jerusalem was seated on a mountain, and compassed with mountains, *Psa. cxxv. 1, 2*, whence it is said he went up to it.

3. It is the part of all, and especially of Christ's ministers, the more they are who mark their steps, and misrepresent their actions, to walk the more circumspectly; that so far as is possible, the mouth of adversaries may be stopped, *2 Cor. xi. 12*. Thus Paul, being to make it evident that the other apostles did approve the doctrine preached by him, taketh with him Barnabas and Titus as two witnesses, according to the law sufficient, *Deut. xvii. 6*, to give testimony to the apostles what doctrine he had preached to the Gentiles, and again to testify to the Gentiles that consent which was betwixt him and the apostles; and this, lest his adversaries might have objected that he had lied in both or either of these: "With Barnabas, and took with me Titus also."

4. Though we are not now to expect immediate revelations from God, whether for direction in our duty, or information of future events, such as were in use before the canon of the Scripture was completed, and the gift of extraordinary prophecy had ceased, *Heb. i. 1*; yet seeing the written word is given unto us as a complete rule both for faith, *John xx. 31*, and manners, *2 Tim. iii. 16, 17*, and as that which may abundantly supply the defect or want of all those extraordinary ways, whereby God did make known his mind unto his people then, *Heb. i. 1*; therefore we ought to advise with God's will, revealed in Scripture, and regulate all our actions, motions, and journeys according to it, both for the lawfulness and expediency of what we undertake, *Psa. cxix. 9*, that thus while we acknowledge God in all our ways, he may direct our paths, *Prov. iii. 6*. Thus Paul advised with God in his journey, for he "went up by revelation;" in place whereof, as said is, we have the written word now.

5. How little ground the papists have to infer from Paul's practice here, that the church of Rome, and particularly the pope, the head thereof, is the supreme judge upon earth of all questions pertaining to religion; and that all preachers, after Paul's example, should submit their doctrine to be tried and judged by Peter's successor, appeareth from this, passing by other things, that Paul did not submit his doctrine to be judged by Peter, or by any other, as if he had been either inferior to them, or uncertain of the truth of that which he had preached: both which had been contrary to Paul's scope, which, as said is, was to evidence that both his doctrine and office were immediately from God; neither will the words bear further than that he did in a friendly and brotherly manner acquaint them with the doctrine preached by him, that their approbation being given unto it, the mouth of adversaries might be stopped; for the word rendered, "to communicate," signifieth to make any thing known to another in a familiar and friendly way, which in strict law we are not bound to. See *Acts xxv. 14*, where the same word is used: "And communicated unto them."

6. Though the minister of Jesus Christ is not to depend upon the approbation of others for con-

firmation of his doctrine, as if he himself were uncertain of the truth thereof, before their testimony he added to it, *chap. i. 8*; yet he is not to be so self-willed as to misregard what others do judge or think of what he preacheth, but ought to demit himself so far as when there is necessity, he may give a friendly account unto others of the doctrine preached by him; that so, if it be possible, mistakes arising through misinformation may be removed, and the joint consent of others to the truth of what he preacheth may be obtained: thus Paul, that he might gain their approbation, did communicate unto the apostles "that gospel which he preached among the Gentiles."

7. When the approbation of others is sought after unto any action or deed, Christian candour will, and ordinary prudence may, teach a man to report the matter of fact truly, which he would have approved of, lest otherwise an approbation surreptitiously required, and given upon misinformation and through mistake, may, upon a discovery, tend unto the informer's greater prejudice: for Paul here, being to gain the approbation of the apostles unto his doctrine, did give them a faithful account of that same doctrine which he had preached: "I communicated that doctrine which I preach among the Gentiles."

8. It tendeth in no small measure to uphold the credit of a man's ministry against his adversaries, that in his doctrine he hath been always constant to himself, without wavering or contradicting of himself in any thing which he did ever vent for truth; providing always that he be constant in the truth: for constancy in error is nothing else but obstinacy; and to retract an error is praiseworthy, *Phil. iii. 7*. Thus Paul, that he may further stop the mouth of adversaries, sheweth the doctrine which he did preach from the beginning of his ministry, and whereof he did give an account to the apostles, was the same which he did presently preach, while he saith, "I communicated unto them the gospel which I preach." It is a word of the present time.

9. As there are always some in the church of God who, for their place, graces, or parts, have deservedly more of reputation than others: so Christian prudence will teach a man to be so far from striving against the stream and current of common fame and universal applause, by labouring to discountenance or oppose without necessity those who are so deservedly applauded unto, that he will endeavour, by giving due respect unto them, to receive approbation from them, whereby he may be in a better capacity to do good unto others, as being approved of by such: for Paul at Jerusalem addresseth himself to those that were of reputation, to wit, James, Peter, and John, *ver. 9*, who, though in their apostolic power they were but equal with the other apostles, *1 Cor. ix. 5*, yet because of their age, gravity, and some other respects, were generally more esteemed of than the rest; and this he did for gaining of their approbation to his office and doctrine; that so he "might not run in vain; I went up," saith he, "to them that were of reputation," &c.

10. There is much prudence required in the

public debating of controverted truths in religion, neither would it be ventured upon without necessity and until all other private means for composing of differences be first essayed, Acts xv. 2, lest thereby unnecessary doubts and scruples be created in the vulgar sort, who do often prove but unskilful judges in weighty and intricate questions: thus Paul, while this controversy was but yet in its birth, did not make any public noise of it, communicating the matter "but privately to them that were of reputation."

11. It is the part of a faithful minister, not only to preach the gospel, and go about all the other parts of his ministerial office faithfully and painfully, and so as he may be approved unto the consciences of all, 2 Tim. iv. 5, but he must be also solicitous about the success of his pains towards those among whom he laboureth: for so was Paul, who compareth his continual labours and painfulness in his ministry to running in a race, and yet was careful, lest he had run in vain, that is, lest his labours had wanted fruit among the hearers; for otherwise, and as to the end intended to be brought about by God, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16, or as to the promised reward, Isa. xlix. 4, the work of a faithful minister is never in vain: "Lest by any means I should run in vain," saith he.

12. Nothing marreth the good and success of the gospel among the hearers, more than difference of judgments, and strifes and debates about these differences among the eminent preachers thereof; for hereby are people carried unto schisms, 1 Cor. i. 12, the truth of God received with respect to persons, 1 Cor. iv. 6, and atheism given way to by many, as resolving to believe nothing till preachers agree among themselves, Acts xviii. 17, and many stumbling-blocks casten before people of all sorts, by the venting of passions, jealousies, animosities, and sometimes a spirit of revenge, which do usually accompany such divisions, 2 Cor. xii. 20; for Paul sheweth he endeavoured so much to get the joint consent of the other apostles to the doctrine preached by him, lest by the calumnies of his adversaries, who affirmed that Paul did differ from the rest, his preaching and other pains should have been useless: "Lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

VER. 3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Here is a sixth evidence, especially of the truth of his doctrine, to wit, that in the point controverted betwixt him and his adversaries, the other apostles did join with Paul, judging circumcision to be a thing indifferent, and not of absolute necessity to salvation, else they would have required Titus to be circumcised, which they did not, but received him in fellowship with them, though he was an uncircumcised Greek.

DOCTRINES.

1. Amongst those controversies which did very early trouble the Christian church, this, concerning the necessity of observing circum-

cision, and the rest of those Levitical ordinances, was one which appeareth (as from several other Scriptures, Acts xv. 1, 2, so) from this, where Paul, mentioning how the apostles joined with him in that controversy which was betwixt him and his adversaries, doth give the instance in circumcision; "Neither Titus was compelled to be circumcised."

2. Though circumcision, and the rest of those Levitical ordinances, were necessarily to be observed by virtue of a divine precept, Gen. xvii. 10, &c., and as the external part of worship then prescribed, Heb. ix. 10, until Christ should come in the flesh, and offer up himself a sacrifice upon the cross, Eph. ii. 15; yet, after he was come, they were abolished, and all necessity to observe them, through virtue of a divine precept, removed; the body being come, the shadow did vanish, Col. ii. 17; the Jews and Gentiles were then to be united in one people, and so that partition-wall was to be removed, Eph. ii. 14, 15. The church also then, to wit, under the New Testament, was bound to believe, and accordingly to profess, that Christ had already come in the flesh, and offered up a perfect and satisfactory sacrifice to God, which was wholly inconsistent with the observing of those legal ceremonies and sacrifices which, by virtue of divine institution, did serve mainly for types and figures of Christ to come, Heb. viii. 5, and ix. 8, 9; for, because of those reasons, the apostles did admit of Titus, a Greek, to their fellowship, not requiring him to be circumcised; "But neither Titus was compelled to be circumcised."

3. It is not unlawful, but a duty incumbent to those who are in place, not only to enjoin attendance upon, and practising of, the external commanded duties of divine worship, but also, by rebuke and other church censures, to constrain and urge those who are disobedient; for Paul maketh the apostles their not compelling of Titus to be circumcised, an evidence that they did not judge circumcision at that time to be a part of commanded worship, which imports, if they had thought otherwise, they would have compelled him to it, to wit, by the force of church censures, for they had not the power of the magistrate to compel him by pecunial mulets, imprisonment, or such like: "But neither Titus was compelled to be circumcised."

4. From this it followeth that the civil magistrate may constrain men, by inflicting of corporal punishments, to go about the external duties of commanded worship, in case that more gentle means do not prevail; for if constraining by ecclesiastic censures be not unlawful, nor a tyranny over the consciences of men, constraining by civil censures must be lawful also; now that men may be compelled by the former, as said is, is here supposed, while he saith, "Neither Titus was compelled to be circumcised."

VER. 4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

5. To whom we gave place by subjection,

no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

He giveth the reason why Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, to wit, because some, called here "false brethren," as having been urgers of the necessity of circumcision, and of the other Levitical ordinances, and were brought in to be members of the church at Jerusalem by fraud, and through reason of their large pretences to piety, whereby they covered their heretical spirits for the time; for so much doth the word rendered "unawares brought in," hold forth; these men, I say, had secretly conveyed themselves to that meeting which Paul had with the other apostles, and this of purpose to try if Paul would stand to the defence of that liberty from the ceremonial law before the apostles, which he had preached among the Gentiles, as a part of Christ's purchase; which if he had not done, but ceded to them in that one particular of circumcising Titus, then they would have triumphed over Paul, among the Gentiles, as if he had recanted before the apostles, and so would have endeavoured to bring back the apostles, Gentiles, and the whole church, to the bondage of the ceremonial law, ver. 4. Therefore was it that neither Paul, nor the other apostles, would yield to the importunate desire of these false brethren, "no, not for an hour," that is, in using of circumcision but that once; and that because this had been to subject the apostles, and their doctrine in the truth controverted, to their adversaries; which the apostles did resolutely withstand, that so the doctrine of the gospel might remain sincere and uncorrupt among the churches of Christ, and particularly among the Galatians, ver. 5.

From ver. 4, learn, 1. Though the ceremonial law of Moses was abolished by Christ's coming in the flesh, (see upon ver. 3, doct. 2,) yet the use and practice thereof was not in itself sinful, but indifferent for a time, chiefly to the Jews, and in some points at least; the Lord, from respect to that which was once his own ordinance, and from condescendence to the weakness of the Jews, who, being educated in the practice of these Levitical ordinances, could not be so soon convinced of their being laid aside, did proceed slowly to the total abrogation of them, removing first the tie of necessity through virtue of a divine precept, whereby they were obliged to observe them, and leaving for a time the practice lawful and indifferent, until the doctrine of the gospel, and freedom from that yoke by Jesus Christ, might be sufficiently cleared, the term whereof is affixed for the most part to be the destruction of Jerusalem, both of city and temple, by the Romans, whereby the most obstinate in it, considering that Christ had now suffered, might have been convinced that an end was put to the Jewish policy, both civil and ecclesiastic, by God; after which time, the use of the ceremonial law was not only dead and unprofitable, but also deadly and damnable. Thus the apostles did not compel Titus to be circumcised, not as if the use of circumcision had been at that time simply and in itself unlawful and sinful; for Paul himself did circumcise Timothy upon grave and weighty considerations, much about,

and probably after that time, Acts xvi. 3, but because that false brethren, then present, would have made bad use of their doing otherwise, to the prejudice of the gospel: "And that because of false brethren," &c.

2. Though the practice of the ceremonial law was for that time a thing in itself indifferent, yet (which also holds of all other things in their own nature indifferent, 1 Cor. viii. 9, 10, &c.) it might not always and upon all occasions lawfully and without sin be practised, but the practice thereof was to be ruled according to charity and prudence; so that in the case of giving scandal by the neglect thereof to the weak and infirm, it was to be practised as Paul did, Acts xvi. 3; but in case of hardening the obstinate, and confirming them in their opinion of its necessity to salvation, and thereby giving the adversaries of truth advantage against the truth by the practice thereof, it was to be forborne; for the apostles here did not circumcise Titus, "because of false brethren, brought in unawares," who would have taken advantage from the practice of the apostles, if they had circumcised him, "to bring the church of Christ again into bondage."

3. It hath been the church's lot, in all times and all places, to have a mixture of wheat and tares, regenerate and unregenerate, godly and profane, in it; even the church which was planted and governed by the apostles themselves, had false brethren; for, saith Paul, "Because of false brethren unawares brought in."

4. Heretical spirits not only can, but usually do, so far dissemble their errors, 2 Pet. ii. 1, and pretend so much to piety, thereby to gain respect and credit, 2 Tim. iii. 5, that the most quick-sighted of men will readily be deceived by them, taking them for the just contrary of that which they really are, until they find an opportune time to discover themselves. Thus, those "false brethren were brought in unawares," to wit, to the church at Jerusalem; they carried the matter so handsomely, what by dissembling their errors, what by their pretences to piety, that the apostles themselves, acting as ordinary ministers in the admission of church members, Acts vi. 3, &c., could see nothing for which to stumble at them, or reject them.

5. Heretical spirits are most active, vigilant, and so affronted, as to ingyre [intrude] themselves upon the most private societies and fellowships of others, if their presence may contribute any thing to advance their pernicious errors. Thus those false brethren do intrude themselves upon that meeting which Paul had with the other apostles, though it was but of few and private, "Who came in privately to spy out our liberty," ver. 2.

6. It is too usual for many to frequent the meetings of God's people and servants, not that they may be edified from them, but that they may find occasion to carp at what they hear, and make bad use of it to the prejudice of Christ's servants, and to their own further confirmation in a sinful course, who carry about their own judgment with them, they come to ensnare others, and the word of the Lord proveth a snare unto them, Ezek. xiv. 4. Thus those "false brethren came in privately to spy out

their liberty," resolving, whatever had been done, they should have ground from it to make Paul invidious; if Titus had been circumcised, they were ready to traduce him to the Gentiles as a man who preached one thing to them, and practised the contrary among the apostles; if he had not been circumcised, they had ground to incense the Jews against him, as a contemner of that divine ordinance.

7. Jesus Christ having, by that only sacrifice of himself upon the cross, fulfilled all those legal types and shadows of things to come, Heb. viii. 5, and ix. 9, hath purchased liberty unto the Christian church, and made them fully free from the observation of those Levitical ceremonies, chap. v. 1; hence this freedom is called "Our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus."

8. The ceremonial law of Moses was a great bondage, and most burdensome yoke, Acts xv. 10, to the ancient church; what through the multitude of performances which were thereby enjoined, some whereof were extremely expensive, Lev. i.—v., others painful and hazardous to the natural life, Gen. xxxiv. 25, and others most wearisome to the flesh, Deut. xvi. 16, and what through the punctual observance of all those ordinances enjoined under most terrible certifications, Deut. xxvii. 26; for the apostle calleth the return of the Christian church to the observance of the ceremonial law, which was endeavoured by those false brethren, a bringing of them into bondage; "That they might bring us into bondage."

From ver. 5, learn, 1. When things in themselves indifferent are urged as necessary, and required as an evidence of our assent unto an untruth, or quitting of any part of truth, in that case, which is indeed a case of confession, the practice of a thing indifferent is sinful, and to be abstained from: for so did the false brethren urge the circumcision of Titus, even as an evidence of Paul's receding from the doctrine of Christian liberty, and therefore he obeyed them not; "To whom we gave place, no, not for an hour."

2. Though much may be done for composing of church differences, by using all meekness and forbearance towards those who oppose themselves, 2 Tim. ii. 25, acting jointly with them in those things, wherein there is an harmonious agreement, Phil. iii. 16; holding of public debates in these things whereabout the difference is, Rom. xiv. 5, providing they be not of the most weighty and substantial truths, Gal. v. 2, 3; yet we are not for peace's cause to quit the least part of truth, whether by a formal denying of it, or doing that which in reason may and ought to be so expounded: thus Paul, who for lawful ceding did become all things to all men, 1 Cor. ix. 19, &c. would not give place by way of subjection, so as to yield the cause controverted to the adversaries, neither would he do any thing, though never so little, and in its own nature indifferent, which might be an evidence of his yielding; "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour:" he would not cede one hairbreadth to them.

3. A minister of Christ, when he is called to confess and avow truth, hath not only his

own peace with God, and keeping of a good conscience to look unto, 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, but also the condition of his flock, who will be much shaken or confirmed in the truth, by his faint, or bold and faithful confession: thus Paul, in the present business, had an eye to the converted Gentiles, of whom were these Galatians, lest their faith had been shaken by his inconstancy; "We gave not place," saith he, "that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

4. It is not enough that people have the name of the gospel among them, or some truths of it being mixed with several errors, but all, and especially ministers, should endeavour to have the gospel in purity and integrity, free from any mixture of contrary errors; for a little leaven, to which error is compared, Matt. xvi. 12, leaveneth the whole lump, 1 Cor. v. 6. Thus it was Paul's endeavour that "the truth of the gospel might continue with them," that is, the whole doctrine of the gospel, not corrupted with any error.

VER. 6. But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me.

Followeth a seventh evidence, that both Paul's doctrine and office were divine, containing the event of that meeting which he had with the apostles, in three things; the first whereof is in this verse, to wit, that of these, or from those who were looked upon as chief among the apostles, of whom Paul's adversaries did boast, as if they had been his superiors, "Paul had learned nothing;" (which last words, or some such like, are to be supplied for making out the sentence;) and because their personal prerogatives, such as that they had seen Christ in the flesh, were apostles, when he was a persecutor, might have been objected to his prejudice; he sheweth these were not to be taken notice of by him, neither would be taken notice of by God, whose judgment is not swayed by any thing which is extrinsecal, and belongeth not to the cause in hand; and therefore their being apostles before him would not make his office or doctrine more uncertain, or less divine than theirs; seeing he was an apostle now, as well as they, and his doctrine such as could not be questioned by themselves: for after that conference, wherein he related to them the gospel preached by him, they corrected nothing and added nothing to what he had said, but approved all.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is nothing contrary to, but agreeth very well with Christian modesty and humility, for a man to speak to his own commendation in some cases; especially when he laboureth under reproach, and when the honour of God and the gospel do also suffer with him: for Paul avoweth that he learned nothing from the chief apostles, and was not in any thing inferior to them: because if he had yielded to the contrary, his adversaries would presently have retorted that he was no apostle, but, at the most, an ordinary

preacher, and his doctrine in time bypast had been erroneous; but of these, or from those, who seemed to be somewhat, supply (for making out the sense) "I learned nothing;" which Paul concealeth in modesty, it being that part of the phrase which should have expressed his praise most, and leaveth it to be supplied by the reader from the scope of the purpose, and from the like expression in the close of the verse: the like form of speaking is used, 1 Chron. iv. 10: "Oh that thou wouldest," &c. or, "If thou wouldest."

2. It is not unusual for heretical spirits to cry up some of Christ's faithful ministers above the rest, and so to have the persons of men in admiration; and this not from any respect to them, but for their own advantage, Jude, ver. 16, as hereby rendering those whom they so cry up suspect of favouring their error, and bearing down the rest with the pretended show of their authority: thus Paul's adversaries did extol Peter, James, and John, as much preferable to him, because of their personal prerogatives above him, as appeareth from Paul's labouring so much to prove that they were no ways superior to him, and to take off any prejudice which might rise against himself from their personal prerogatives of seeing Christ in the flesh, and being apostles before him; "But from those I learned nothing, whosoever they were," &c.

3. In our esteem of persons and things, our judgment ought not to be ruled by the approbation of men, so as to put a price upon every thing which is commonly esteemed of among men, Luke xvi. 15, but by the approbation of God, so that every thing may have more or less weight with us according as he esteemeth of it: thus Paul regarded not the personal prerogatives of the other apostles, as bearing any weight in the present business, because God regarded them not; "It maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person."

4. The Lord, in passing judgment upon persons or things, is not swayed with any thing which is extrinsecal, and belongeth not unto the cause whereabout he judgeth: he respecteth not the person of man, that is, he will not approve or disapprove of a man's cause for his person, if it be not otherwise worthy of approbation or reproof; because most frequently a man's cause and person come under different considerations: for, saith he, "God accepteth of no man's person:" whereby in this place is meant, that the personal prerogatives of the other apostles did not bear weight with God to make Paul's office or doctrine more uncertain, and less divine than theirs; seeing whatever other use those prerogatives did serve for, yet they appertained nothing to the present cause.

5. Though some of Christ's faithful servants may be cried up by light wits, or heretical spirits, to the down-bearing of the deserved estimation of others; yet so far ought they themselves to be from being transported with groundless applause, and from despising those others, beyond whom they are so much esteemed of, that they are to bear up their credit so much the more by withholding no approbation of theirs from them which is their due; although they should thereby contradict their own flatterers, and make them liars: for those apostles, who were so much

cried up by the false brethren, to Paul's prejudice, did thoroughly approve his doctrine, declaring him to be an orthodox preacher and an apostle of Jesus Christ as well as themselves, contrary to what his adversaries and their flatterers affirmed of him; "In conference they added nothing to me:" and ver. 9, "They gave me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship."

VER. 7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles;)

9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Here is a second part of the event of that meeting at Jerusalem, to wit, that when the apostles, James, Cephas, (that is, Peter,) John i. 42, and John had by certain evidences found that the gospel of the uncircumcision, or the apostolic office to preach the gospel among the uncircumcised Gentiles, was concredited by God to Paul, as well as the gospel of circumcision, or the apostolic office to preach the gospel among the circumcised Jews, was committed unto Peter, ver. 7, which they did gather from this, that the like divine assistance, blessing, and success, did accompany the labours both of Peter and Paul towards their respective charges, and so their office behoved to be equally divine, ver. 8; and when those three apostles (who were commonly, and no less deservedly, reputed pillars of the church, as being, under God, the upholders of it by their ministry, gifts, diligence and fidelity) had seen the grace, or gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary, which were bestowed by God upon Paul, fitting him every way for the apostolic office, they did without more ado acknowledge both Paul and Barnabas for their colleagues or fellow apostles, giving them the right hand in evidence of the same, as also of their mutual agreement in dividing of their charge, so as that Paul and Barnabas should go on to discharge their apostolic office among the Gentiles, and the other three among the Jews, ver. 9, which paction is nothing contrary to what is held forth Acts xv. 7; for Peter speaketh not there that his ordinary charge was to preach unto the Gentiles, but of that one act of his mentioned Acts x., whereby he was at one time employed to preach to them at the first beginning of their conversion: all which doth evidence that Paul was an apostle, immediately called, and acknowledged to be such by the other apostles.

DOCTRINES.

This Scripture doth many ways refute that

dream of the papists concerning Peter's primacy, or supremacy over the rest of the apostles, and over the catholic church, and of the pope's succeeding to Peter in that supposed illimited trust: for,

(1.) The apostle's drift in all this, is to show that he was every way equal with Peter, and the rest of the apostles, and no ways inferior unto them, and that he was acknowledged to be so by Peter himself; so that Peter was not supreme over all: "When they saw that the gospel of uncircumcision was committed unto me," &c.

(2.) Paul doth here compare himself mainly and particularly with Peter, while he expresseth him by name, even when he is speaking of these things, which were common to Peter with the other two, James and John, as that the gospel of circumcision was committed to Peter, and this because it seemeth Paul's adversaries did mainly cry up Peter, as superior to him; so that this of Peter's primacy above the other apostles hath been an old plea, but ill grounded, and expressly confuted by Paul in this place; "As the gospel of circumcision was committed unto Peter."

(3.) We find here a divine ordinance, that Peter should exercise his office among the Jews, as their apostle, of which ordinance they can produce no change; and so if the pope plead to be Peter's successor, he must challenge a superiority over the Jews, and hath nothing to do with us; "As the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter."

(4.) Paul, by virtue of the same divine ordinance, was to exercise his office among the Gentiles, as their apostle, and endued with the same authority in all points, which Peter had over the Jews; and therefore Peter was not supreme. But if the pope give out himself for universal pastor over the whole world, he must not plead his succession to Peter so much as to Paul, who had the "gospel of the uncircumcision committed to him;" which was a charge extending almost to all the universal world.

(5.) While there is a question here of dignity anent [concerning] the apostles, James is first named before Peter, as being of eminent authority among the apostles, who was president at the council of Jerusalem, for he spake last, and concluded all, Acts xv. 13, &c.; to whom Paul did betake himself, and with whom all the elders did convene in a matter of great concernment, and not with Peter, Acts xxi. 18; so that James hath rather been supreme than Peter; at least, it followeth, the first naming of Peter in other places, (Matt. x. 2, Mark iii. 16,) is no sufficient ground whereon to build his supremacy: "And when James, Cephas, and John."

(6.) Peter was at this time at Jerusalem, and without doubt had not yet seen Rome, seventeen years at least after Christ's resurrection, (ver. 1 compared with chap. i. 18;) yea, neither was he at Rome a long time after this, when Paul was there a prisoner, Col. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 16. How then could he have sitten bishop at Rome twenty-five years before his death? as is alleged for one main ground upon which the pope's succession to Peter, as universal bishop over the whole world, is founded: "And when James, Cephas, and John perceived."

(7.) There is here a solemn and mutual agreement, that Paul, and not Peter, should be the apostle of the Gentiles: and therefore, how could Peter have been twenty-five years bishop at Rome, except he had violated his solemn paction confirmed by giving his hand, which were most absurd once to mention? "They gave the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen."

2. The more we wait upon God for his call and direction to our undertaking, we have ground to expect, that the more of success and of a blessing will accompany them; for Paul, who did not undertake this journey to Jerusalem without the call of God, ver. 2, hath all things succeeding with him according to his heart's wish; so that not only the apostles did not condemn the doctrine preached by him, ver. 6; but, on the contrary, gave him their approbation, acknowledging him for their colleague and fellow-apostle, whereby the mouths of his adversaries might have been fully stopped: "But contrariwise they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship;" for so are the words to be constructed, all that which interveneth being the reason which moved James, Peter, and John to do what they did.

3. The note which ariseth from dividing of the charge of Jews and Gentiles betwixt Peter and Paul, is at large, Col. i. 25, Doctr. 3.

4. The office of preaching the gospel, is a special trust, whereby a rich treasure of saving truths, 2 Cor. iv. 7, is concredited to weak men, who must be answerable to God how they keep, maintain and dispense that treasure for the good of souls: hence he saith, "the gospel was committed," or as a rich treasure, intrusted to him; "The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me."

5. It is not the pains of ministers, Isa. xlix. 4, or any virtue which is in the word preached, as of itself, 1 Cor. i. 18, from whence the success of the ministry among a people floweth, but from the effectual working of the Spirit of God, whereby he effectually worketh that which the word doth press upon us, 1 Cor. ii. 6; for Paul ascribeth the success both of his own and Peter's ministry to this; "He that wrought effectually in Peter, the same was mighty in me."

6. The power with which the Lord accompanieth his word towards those whom he intendeth to convert by it, is most efficacious and such as cannot be resisted, but breaketh through and taketh away whatever doth oppose it; "He that wrought effectually:" the word signifieth to work with pith and energy, and frequently signifieth to work with irresistible efficacy.

7. Where a minister's pains are much blessed of God, for the turning of many souls to God, and where a man is endued with gifts and parts for the ministerial calling, it is a real testimony and speaking evidence of that man's calling from God; for from this do they gather, that the gospel of uncircumcision was committed to Paul, because his ministry was powerful among the Gentiles, and endued with gifts fitting him every way for the apostolic office: for, saith he, "The same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles, and they perceived the grace which was given unto me."

8. It is the duty of ministers, as pillars, to uphold the truth by their doctrine, prayers, graces and parts, Isa. lxii. 6, 7; 2 Tim. ii. 2; to be constant in truth against all contrary blasts, Matt. xi. 7; to adorn the truth by good example of an holy life, whereby they ought to shine before others, Matt. v. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 12; for, as James, Cephas, and John were accounted pillars; so they, and all faithful ministers, are really such: and Paul doth here indirectly tax the common opinion, whereby that name was appropriate only to those three, which did belong also to others: hence it is also that the church militant, in respect of the ministry of the word chiefly, is called the pillar and ground of truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15. "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars."

9. Whom God doth call to the undergoing of any employment, and chiefly whom he calleth to the ministry, those he fitteth with gifts and abilities suitable for that employment in some measure whether lesser or greater, Matt. xxv. 15; for James, Cephas, and John did not acknowledge Paul to be an apostle, called by God, but upon their perceiving that grace, or gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary, were bestowed upon him; "They saw that the gospel of uncircumcision was committed unto me, when they perceived the grace that was given to me."

10. We ought not to withhold our approbation, especially when it is craved, from that which by evident signs and reasons we perceive to be approved of by God, although there be many who disapprove it, and though the giving of our approbation to it may disoblige those who otherwise pretend much friendship to us; for those three apostles, perceiving by most convincing evidences that God had called Paul to be an apostle, they acknowledged him for such, though those who did cry them much up as pillars, and what not, did no doubt oppose their so doing, as tending evidently to the disadvantage of their cause; "They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship."

VER. 10. Only *they would* that we should remember the poor, the same which I also was forward to do.

The third thing in the event of that meeting, which did also evidence that Paul and the other apostles did part good friends, and in all things one among themselves, was, that the other apostles did earnestly recommend to Paul and Barnabas the collecting of some charity among the churches of the Gentiles, 1 Cor. xvi. 1; to supply the poor Jews who were turned Christians, Rom. xv. 25; which they performed speedily and diligently. See the places cited, and 2 Cor. viii. and ix.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is frequently the lot of those who are rich in grace, to be poor in the things of a present life; and who are heirs of a kingdom, Luke xii. 32, to be driven into such straits, as they are forced to live upon some charitable supply from others; God seeing it convenient hereby to wean

them from worldly contentments, that heaven may be the more longed after, and more sweet when it cometh; thus the Christians in Judea, for the most part, were poor, and such as needed supply from the Gentiles; "Only they would that we should remember the poor."

2. Though those who are our own poor, within the bounds where we live, are chiefly to be relieved by us, because of our nearer interest in such, 1 Tim. v. 8; yet, in cases of extremity, even those poor who live remote from us (because they are also of our own flesh, Isa. lviii. 7; and members of the same mystical body, if believers, Gal. vi. 10,) are also to be supplied by us: for Paul was to stir up the Gentiles to contribute for the poor in Judea; "Only they would that we should remember the poor."

3. The care of the poor, and supply of the outward necessities of the saints, is an employment not unworthy of the very chief apostles, and which ministers and other officers of the church ought to make conscience of: for the care of the poor, was the last farewell of those apostles: "Only they would that we should remember the poor, which Paul also was forward to do."

4. The ministers of Jesus Christ ought to press upon the people, not only duties which are easy and cost them nought, but also those that are burdensome and expensive, especially that they would willingly give of those things which they enjoy, for the supply of others which want; and are to be as forward in pressing the one sort of duties as the other, as being equally profitable to the church, and most evidencing of an inward work of grace in the heart, 1 John iii. 17. Thus Paul was forward to press upon the Gentiles to give some supply to the poor Jews; "The same which I was also forward to do," or did speedily and diligently, as the word signifieth.

VER. 11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

From this verse to the 15th, there is a further evidence of that truth which he had formerly asserted concerning the authority of his office and his divine doctrine, even in that point which was controverted betwixt him and his adversaries; which he maketh appear from this, that, as an apostle, and by virtue of his apostolic office, he did with authority rebuke Peter, one of the chief apostles, when in his practice at Antioch he declined from the doctrine taught by him concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and that for any thing which appeareth to the contrary, Peter in this debate did yield to Paul, as having truth for him. This action of Paul's towards Peter, is first summarily propounded in this verse, wherein Paul sheweth that boldly and freely he did oppose himself to Peter, and that because his carriage, as he doth clear more fully afterward, was most blameworthy.

DOCTRINES.

1. No band of friendship or confederacy, which parties have entered, no fear of occasioning the breaking off of friendship, whatever may

be the consequences thereof, ought to make those who are so conjoined connive at others in a sinful course, or withhold a testimony against that which is sinful in their friend, when the hazard which may ensue from his sin to the work and people of God doth call for it: for though Paul had come to Jerusalem of purpose to purchase a good understanding betwixt him and Peter, ver. 1, 2; though they had given, not long since, mutual evidences of their harmony and agreement, ver. 9; and though their rending asunder was the thing which adversaries to truth would have been most glad of, as making much for the advantage of their bad cause; yet not long after this agreement was made, when Peter falleth in a sin reproof-worthy, which had dreadful consequences to the people and work of God (as will appear afterward) following upon it, Paul doth freely and boldly give testimony against his sinful course; "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face."

2. As the ministers of Jesus Christ are bound to reprove sin and vice; so they are to reprove it, first, with much boldness and resolution, not faintly, as if they were more feared for the offence of man, than grieved for the dishonour of God: so Paul, in reproofing Peter, "withstood him." In the original, it is a military word, and signifieth to stand against, whether it be by force of arms or arguments; it is a word of defiance, and combating as it were, hand to hand, face to face, and foot to foot, not yielding a hairbreadth to the adversary, Rom. xiii. 2; Eph. vi. 13. Secondly, with ingenuity and candour, so as not to conceal the man's fault only from himself, and in the mean time to speak of it broad and wide unto others for his prejudice, Lev. xix. 16; but they are to declare his sin even down to himself, and rebuke him for it. Thus Paul "withstood Peter to the face;" for the word in the original doth not import that he withstood him only in show, and for the fashion, making the beholders think they were serious when they were not, as some of the ancients did allege. Such dissimulation had been most base in those two eminent apostles, and Paul had not here spoken truly, affirming that Peter was "worthy to be blamed, and that he walked not uprightly;" so the word must read, as it is here rendered, to the face, or to his face, as 2 Cor. x. 1. Thirdly, with certainty and knowledge of the deed reprov'd, both for the truth of the fact, and the vicious quality of it. Paul, before he reprov'd, was assured of both these; "Because he was to be blamed," saith he.

3. The most eminent saints on earth are not free of their own sinful and blameworthy failings; that hereby they may be kept humble, and from being lifted up with their gifts, graces, and other excellences, 2 Cor. xii. 7, and others may hereby learn not to think of them above what is written, 1 Cor. iv. 6; for, even the apostles themselves, and penmen of Scripture, though they could not err in writing Scripture, being therein guided by the infallible assistance of the Spirit, 2 Pet. i. 21; yet in other things they had their own sinful failings, as is evident in Peter; "Because he was to be blamed."

4. It is the part of every man, though never

so eminent and esteemed of by others, when he meeteth with a just and deserved reproof, to stoop to it, without repining to embrace it, and with silence to correct the error, and amend the fault which is reprov'd: for "he that hateth reproof shall die," Prov. xv. 10. So doth Peter, who, being sharply rebuked by Paul, defendeth not his fault, contendeth not with his reprover, but patiently taketh with his reproof, as appeareth from his silence; for he replieth nothing.

VER. 12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Next, the apostle enlargeth what he had briefly propounded: and, first, he sheweth Peter's sin for which he was reprov'd, to wit, that whereas before some Jews did come from Jerusalem, where the apostle James had his residence, Peter did keep fellowship with the Christian Gentiles, and had eaten freely with them, (wherein he did right according to the doctrine of Christian liberty, by which all differences of meats, and betwixt Jew and Gentile, are removed under the New Testament, as Peter himself was instructed by vision, Acts xi. 9,) but when those Jews did come, he did separate from the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful to eat with them, and this through fear of offending those forementioned Jews, who were most tenacious of the ceremonial law, ver. 12, by which had example of Peter's, the other Jews, which were at Antioch, were moved to withdraw from the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful to have entire fellowship with them; yea, and Barnabas also did the like, ver. 13.

From whence we learn, 1. Such influence have circumstances upon our actions, that though an action, considered simply and in itself, be not sinful; yet, by reason of accompanying circumstances, it may become exceeding sinful: for the exceeding sinfulness of Peter's action, for which he was here reprov'd, did not consist in his simple abstinence from certain kinds of meats, to eschew the offence of the weak; for Paul did something like to this himself, Acts xvi. 3; xxi. 26; but in the circumstances which did accompany that his abstinence, which will appear by pointing at some of those circumstances, whereby also the text will be further cleared; as, first, that he did withdraw from the Gentiles in eating, as if they had been no church members, with whom it was lawful to have entire fellowship; "He withdrew, and separated himself." Secondly, that he abstained not among the Jews at Jerusalem, which had been more tolerable, but at Antioch, where, a little before, he had openly done the contrary, in using his Christian liberty: for, "before he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew." Thirdly, that he did withdraw, not as if it had been a thing indifferent to have done

so, or otherwise, and therefore would do it for a time to gain the Jews; but as if it had been a thing in itself sinful to have eaten with them, contrary to what himself knew, and was informed of by the heavenly vision; and therefore it is called dissimulation in him, while it is said, "The other Jews dissembled with him likewise." Fourthly, that his abstinence was not for gaining of the weak Jews, whom he might afterwards have informed of the abrogation of these Levitical ordinances, but from fear of losing esteem with, and incurring the hatred of, those who were spying out their liberty, and would doubtless make bad use of that his abstinence, for confirming themselves in, and drawing over others to, their errors; "Fearing them which were of the circumcision." Fifthly, that by his example he did hurt to the other Jews, who were beginning to be informed concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and in evidence of it, had been eating with the Gentiles; but now, by this practice of Peter's, did again drink in their former error; "And the other Jews dissembled likewise." Sixthly, this practice of his (as is clear from the following 14th verse) did tend to force the Christian Gentiles to take on the yoke of the ceremonial law, (which had been most sinful in them, they being never under it,) as they would not have been debarred from the fellowship of Peter, and of the church; "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as the Jews?" And, seventhly, he hereby gave a great dash to Paul's doctrine, and the doctrine of the gospel concerning Christian liberty, and the abrogation of the ceremonial law; for his practice did speak as much, as if it had been yet in force; "He withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."

2. So weak and inconstant are the best of men, that, being left to themselves, the least blast of temptation will make them break off the course of doing well in the very midst, and, without respect had either to conscience or credit, openly to desert it: for Peter having begun well in the use of Christian liberty, by eating with the Gentiles, giveth evidence of great levity, in that for fear of man's offence he did presently slip from it; "Before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew."

3. To separate from, and to break off communion with, a true church, and the received members thereof, is such an act as cannot be attempted without sin; no, not though hereby we could eschew the offence and stumbling of many: for this was it that made Peter blameworthy, even his separating from the church of the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful to keep communion with them, notwithstanding the Jews would have been offended if he had done otherwise; "He withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision."

4. It is of great concernment to men of grace and parts, who are in public place, and do enjoy the applause of many, to be both men of courage, and self-denied spirits; and even when they enjoy the applause of all, to be dead and dying to it; lest, if they conceit more of it than they ought, through their fleshly fear of losing ap-

plause and incurring hatred from men, they venture upon the dishonour of God: for even Peter, fearing too much his loss of esteem among the Jews, did sin against the Lord; "He withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision," or the Jews, who are frequently so designed.

5. As good men sometimes, under the fit of a violent temptation, will in practice condemn that which in their judgment they do approve, so for any to sin thus against their light, is an high aggravation of their guilt; for this is the dissimulation wherewith Peter is charged, and whereby his sin is here aggregated [aggravated]: by his practice he pretended that fellowship with the Christian Gentiles was unlawful, in the contrary whereof he was instructed by the heavenly vision, Acts xi. 9; "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him."

6. Of so great force is the bad example of men, eminent, gracious, and learned, that not only the weak and infirm, but even those who are strong, and richly endued both with grace and parts, will sometimes be corrupted by it; it is usual for us unawares to esteem of such as of somewhat more than men, and being once so far engaged in our esteem of them, we do not so narrowly examine their actions as we would of other men. Hence all is taken for current that cometh from them; thus not only the vulgar Jews, but even Barnabas himself, an eminent apostle, Acts xiii. 1, 2, was carried away with Peter's bad example; "And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation." And, ver. 14, his example had a kind of compulsion in it towards the Gentiles, to make them do as he did; "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

7. A speat [flood] and inundation of evil examples, though even held forth by private Christians, especially if they be otherwise pious, is so impetuous, and of such force, to carry others along in their practice with it, that even the very best of men can very hardly stand out against it: for Barnabas, his dissimulation is ascribed not only to Peter's bad example, but also, if not mainly, to that influence which the evil example of these other Jews had upon him; "And the other Jews dissembled likewise, insomuch that Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation."

8. It is of great concernment unto all superiors, and chiefly those who are eminent for piety and parts, to take diligent heed lest they give bad example unto others; and this not only because of what is partly expressed in the two former doctrines, but also because the sins of others, which are occasioned by the evil example of any, will be justly charged upon him whose bad example they do follow; for the dissimulation of the Jews and Barnabas is mentioned as an aggravation of Peter's sin, which had such dreadful consequences; "And the other Jews dissembled likewise."

VER. 15. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the

gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Secondly, The apostle enlargeth what he said, ver. 11, of his withstanding Peter; showing that when he had perceived they walked not uprightly, or with a straight foot, according to the sincere doctrine of the gospel, without more ado he did openly fall upon Peter, whose example had given the occasion of that sin unto all the rest; and the fault which he chargeth him with, and that which did aggræve his sin most, was that by his example he did constrain the Gentiles, as they would not have been cast out of Peter's fellowship and of the church, to observe the ceremonial law of Moses, as the Jews did; the iniquity whereof he sheweth in this, that Peter himself, who was a Jew, and so more bound to observe the ceremonial law, which was given not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews, had cast off that yoke, and lived after the manner of the Gentiles, as is clear from ver. 12, and therefore there was no reason for it that he should enforce that yoke upon others.

DOCTRINES.

1. The multitude of those who swerve from truth, should not make truth the less lovely unto, or blunt the edge of others in the defence of it against error; though truth should be deserted by all except one only, it is worthy to be owned, stood to, and defended by that one, and this against all who do oppose it; for though Peter, the other Jews, Barnabas, and all, did dissemble and halt from the truth, yet Paul alone doth stand for it; "And when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth, I said unto Peter," &c.

2. It is the duty of all professors to walk so both in the matter of opinion and practice, as is suitable unto and well agreeing with the sincere truth of God held out in the gospel, even so as that, in opinion, they hold nothing which is though but indirectly contrary to that truth, or in practice act nothing which may reflect upon that truth; and when they halt, or walk not with a straight foot in either of those, they are blameworthy; for the fault of Peter and the rest, for which they are here reprov'd, was, "That they walked not uprightly," or with a straight foot, "according to the truth of the gospel." Their practice and their opinion concerning the lawfulness of gratifying the Jews in the present business, did indirectly at least contradict and reflect upon that great gospel truth about the abrogation of the ceremonial law.

3. When many are guilty of one and the same sin, the minister of Jesus Christ ought to reprove wisely and without respect of persons, making the weight of the reproof light upon them, as they have been more or less accessory to the sin; for because Peter's example had been the occasion of sin to all the rest, Paul directeth the reproof to him by name, and this before the rest, that they might see themselves, indirectly at

least, reprov'd also for following this bad example; "I said unto Peter before *them* all."

4. Though private sins, which have not broken forth to a public scandal of many, are to be rebuked in private, Matt. xviii. 15, yet public sins are to receive public rebukes, that hereby the public scandal may be removed, and others may be scared from taking encouragement from those sins to do the like, 1 Tim. v. 20. Thus, because Peter did sin publicly before all, Paul, by way of reproof, "said unto Peter before *them* all."

5. Though the binding power of the ceremonial law was abrogated at Christ's death, and the practice thereof, in some things at least, left as a thing lawful and in itself indifferent unto all for a time after that, ver. 4, Doct. 1, yet the observation thereof, even for that time, was dispensed with more for the Jews' sake, and was more tolerable in them who were born and educated under the binding power of that yoke, than in the Gentiles, to whom that law was never given, and so were to observe it, or any part of it, only in case of scandalising the weak Jews by their neglecting of it, Rom. xiv. 20, 21. This difference betwixt Jew and Gentile, as to the practice of the ceremonial law, is gathered from the apostle's way of arguing with Peter, from the less to the more; "If thou, being a Jew, livest not as do the Jews," to wit, in observing the ceremonial law, "why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" Whereby he implieth that the observation of these ceremonies was more to be comported with in the Jews than in the Gentiles.

6. It is a piece of unreasonable absurdity in a minister, for which he can give no account neither to God nor man, to take liberty of practice to himself in those things which he doth condemn in others, and the contrary of which he doth either by his doctrine or example at other times constrain them to, as appeareth from the question here propounded, "If thou livest not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" as if he had said, Thou can neither answer to God nor man for it.

7. It is no small sin for superiors to bind where the Lord hath left free, by urging upon their inferiors the observing of a thing, in its own nature indifferent, as necessary; except it be in those cases wherein the Lord, by those circumstances which do accompany it, doth point it out as necessary; such are the cases of scandal, Acts xv. 28, 29, and contempt, 1 Cor. xiv. 40, for hereby mainly is Peter's sin aggræved, that he did compel the Gentiles to the necessary observation of the ceremonial law, though the use of it was at that time indifferent; "Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

8. In the primitive times of the Christian church, the people of God did wonderfully subject themselves to the ministry of the word in the hand of his servants, and much more than people now do; for if the actions of the apostles compelled men to do this or that, as Peter's action did compel the Gentiles, what then did their doctrine and heavenly exhortations? "Why compellest thou the Gentiles," &c.

VER. 15. We *who are Jews* by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Some interpreters do conceive that Paul's speech to Peter doth yet continue in these two verses : yea, and some think that it is extended to the end of the chapter : but others conceive that Paul, having closed the narration of what passed betwixt him and Peter, ver. 14, doth here return to speak to the Galatians ; and though those last do seem to have most of reason for them, yet which of these opinions do stand it is all one to the main purpose : for it is clear that the apostle doth here state and fall upon one of the main questions which were betwixt him and his adversaries ; to wit, That we are justified, or accepted of, and declared righteous in God's sight, by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law.

And for the better understanding of the thread and method of the apostle's dispute, together with the state of the present question, and the sense and force of those arguments which he maketh use of to confirm the truth in controversy, we shall premit [premise] three things in general : First, the apostle's adversaries erred in two things mainly. 1. They urged the rigid observation of the ceremonial law, as necessary by virtue of a divine precept standing yet in force, as may be gathered from the apostle's reasoning, chap. iii. 19, 25, and chap. iv. 3—5. 2. As seducers wax worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13, so they went higher, and urged the observation of these ceremonies, as that whereby, jointly at least with Christ, sinners are justified before God, as appeareth from chap. ii. 16, 21, and iii. 11. Now the apostle addresseth himself to the refutation of both those errors ; and because the latter error, to wit, that sinners are justified by their obedience to the law, is most dangerous, therefore he doth refute it first and apart, to ver. 19, chap. iii. And next, he refuteth that first error jointly with the other ; proving there was no necessity at all of observing the ceremonial law, or any part of that Mosaical pedagogue, now under the New Testament, and that it ought not now to be observed ; the date prefixed by God for the observation of it being already expired ; to ver. 13, chap. v. Secondly, while the apostle, all along this dispute, denieth we are justified, or that righteousness and the inheritance do come by the law ; he understandeth by the law, not the whole doctrine delivered by Moses upon Mount Sinai ; for the law, being so taken, was a covenant of grace, as appeareth from the preface and promises of the decalogue, and from the ceremonial law, which shadowed forth Christ and remission of sins through him, Heb. x. 4, 8, 9 ; so that believers under the Old Testament may be said to have been justified, and to have had righteousness by

the law in this sense : for it implieth no further than that they were justified according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, as it was wrapped up in that ancient legal dispensation. The apostle therefore takes the law more strictly, and in the sense of his adversaries, for the mere precepts and threatenings of the law, as it requires perfect obedience, and curseth those who have it not, abstracting from Christ and grace, which were held forth (though but obscurely) in it ; for in that sense his adversaries maintained justification by the law ; and therefore the apostle, while he refuteth justification by the law, must be understood to speak of the law in the same sense also, which sometimes he clearly expresseth, while he explaineth his meaning by denying we are justified by the works of the law, ver. 16, and chap. iii. 5, 10. Thirdly, that the apostle may strike at the root of this their most dangerous error of justification by works, he excludeth all works in general, not only those of the ceremonial law, but the works also of the moral law ; yea, and all works of ours whatsoever, from having influence upon justification : for, as shall be observed in the dispute itself, the arguments used by the apostle to prove that we are not justified by works, are applicable to the moral law equally, if not more than to the ceremonial law ; yea, and do exclude the works of the regenerate as well as of the unregenerate : besides, it is sure that none professing the name of Christ, as the apostle's adversaries did, would have urged the naked external performance of those ceremonies as having influence upon justification, except as it was conjoined with internal love to God and our neighbour, commanded by the moral law, and signified, expressed, and some one way or other, advanced, by those outward performances : neither is it conceivable how they, maintaining a necessity of faith in Christ, could imagine that any works whatsoever, whether done in obedience to the ceremonial law or to the moral, being such works only as are done by the power of nature and strength of freewill, without the grace of Christ, should have justified a sinner, and made him righteous before God ; so that if Paul in this dispute had excluded from justification only the external works of the ceremonial law, and not the works of the moral law also, or only all works whatsoever flowing from the strength of nature, or the works of the unregenerate, and not the works of the regenerate also, which are performed by the grace of Christ, he should have quite mistaken the question, and not at all refuted his adversaries. It doth, therefore, of necessity follow, that the apostle reasoneth against justification by works done in obedience to the law in general, and that he affirmeth we are justified only by faith in opposition to all works of ours whatsoever ; which he proveth by two arguments in this chapter. First, because he himself and other Jews, though they enjoyed by birth and education (as being born members of the visible church) many privileges beyond the Gentiles, who were profane sinners, and born aliens from God, and therefore might have expected to be justified by their good works, if so any could be justified that way ; yet they (knowing perfectly that all their works, done in obedience to

the law, could never justify or make them righteous before God, and that only faith in Christ would make them so righteous, even they, who had as much reason to boast of their works as any other, had renounced all confidence in their works, and betaken themselves only to faith in Jesus Christ for justification; and hereby he leaveth unto them to gather what madness it were for those Galatians, or any other of the Gentiles, to rely upon the works of the law, so as to be justified by them; which he further confirmeth, as it seemeth, from Psalm cxliii. 2; affirming that no flesh, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be justified, to wit, by the works of the law, which is here supplied by the apostle, without adding to the sense. The like addition of words for explanation, without wronging the sense, is frequently used in the New Testament, where scriptures are cited out of the Old; as Matt. iv. 10, compared with Deut. vi. 13; Heb. x. 5, compared with Psal. xl. 7.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though every man by nature is a child of wrath, and enemy to God, Eph. ii. 3, as nature speaketh that which is born with us and conveyed unto us from our parents by carnal generation, Psal. li. 5; yet all those who are born within the visible church have a right by nature unto church privileges, and to enjoy the external means of grace and salvation, as nature speaketh that which is born with us, not of natural generation, but of free grace, which God is pleased to honour his people with, and to deny unto others: for the apostle here calleth himself and others come of Abraham, who had been from that time upwards the only visible church, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20, Jews by nature; whereby he doth not simply design them to be men of such a nation, for that could make nothing to the apostle's scope in the present argument; besides that the Jew is here opposed to sinners of the Gentiles: so it must relate some way to their spiritual state; neither doth it import that much, as if they had inherent holiness, and were altogether sinless by nature: for this is contradicted by Scripture, Rom. iii. 9. So the meaning must be, that from their birth, and because of God's love to them in making choice of them to be a church to himself above all nations, Deut. vii. 6, they were (externally, at least) in covenant with God, Deut. xxix. 12; whereby they had a right to all church privileges, as of being under God's special care and government, Isa. iv. 5, 6, of enjoying the ordinary means of salvation, as they were capable of them, Gen. xvii. 12. And as it was with the Jews then, so is it with those that are born within the visible church now: they are Christians by birth, to wit, in the sense presently mentioned: for the visible church under the New Testament, and among the Gentiles, hath succeeded to those privileges which were enjoyed by the church under the Old, Rom. xi. 17; so that even young infants are expressly called holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14, to wit, with an external and federal holiness; and on this account they have right to baptism, the seal of the covenant, which no infidel can claim, Acts ii. 38, 39. "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles."

2. The doctrine of free justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by works, was early opposed by Satan and heretical spirits, and no doctrine so much opposed as it was, and that because no truth is more necessary to be kept pure than this is, it being such a truth as if it be kept pure several other truths are kept pure also; and if it fall, many other truths do also fall with it: therefore is it that Satan did so much labour, and yet laboureth, to bear it down; for the defacing of this truth was mainly aimed at by the false apostles among those Galatians, as appeareth from the apostle's setting of himself so much to defend it: "That we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law," saith he.

3. Concerning the nature of justification, we learn several things: First, That justification is not the Lord's making one who was before unjust, to be just by working of habitual and inherent righteousness in him, as the papists do take it, confounding justification and sanctification, contrary to Scripture, 1 Cor. vi. 11. But it is a judicial action, whereby the Lord absolveth the sinner from death and wrath, and adjudgeth him to life eternal: for the word expressing this grace here, is a judicial word taken from courts of justice, which being attributed to the judge, is opposed to condemn, Rom. viii. 33, 34, and so signifieth to absolve and give sentence: neither doth the Scripture ever make use of this word in any other sense, where the justification of a sinner before God is spoken of: "Knowing that a man is not justified," &c., and "that we might be justified." Secondly, The ground whereupon, and the cause for which sinners are thus justified or absolved from wrath, and adjudged to life eternal, is not any works which they do in obedience to the law of God, whether ceremonial or moral; for works are excluded, while he saith, "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ:" it is not, "except by the faith," &c., as if works were only excluded, when faith is not joined with them, as the papists do read it; but the word is well turned here by the adversative particle "but," as it is frequently in Scripture. See chap. i. 7, Matt. xii. 4. So that works are simply excluded, and faith established, as only having hand in this business; which is more plainly asserted afterwards—"That we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law:" by which are meant both the works of the moral and ceremonial law, as we cleared in the exposition. Thirdly, The works which are excluded from having hand in justification, are not only those which are done before conversion, but also which follow after, and flow from the working of God's Spirit in us: even those works are imperfect, Isa. lxix. 6, and so cannot make us completely righteous, and we do owe them to God in the mean time, Luke xvii. 10, and so they cannot satisfy divine justice for the failings of the bypast time. They are the work of God's Spirit in us, Phil. ii. 13, and so we can merit nothing at God's hand by them: for he excludeth the works of the law in general. Now the good works of the regenerate are such as are commanded by the law, and done in obedience to the law, besides that those false apostles did admit a

mixture of faith and works in justification, so that if the apostle had not excluded even works which flow from faith, they might have quickly agreed upon the point, "Man is not justified by the works of the law." Fourthly, That through virtue whereof we are thus justified and absolved by God, is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, performed by himself while he was here on earth, both in doing what we should have done, Matt. iii. 15, and suffering what we ought to have suffered, Gal. iii. 13, which righteousness is not inherent in us, but imputed to us, Rom. v. 17—19, as the sum of money paid by the cautioner standeth good in law for the principal debtor; so we are said to be justified by the faith of Christ, or faith in Jesus Christ, as laying hold upon his righteousness, which is imputed to us, as is said, and by which only we are made righteous. Fifthly, Though faith be not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces; for it worketh by love, chap. v. 7; yet faith is that only grace which hath influence in our justification; for all other works, even those that flow from grace, are excluded, and only faith admitted to have hand in this business: "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," and, "that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." Sixthly, Faith hath influence upon our justification, not as it is a work, or because of any worth which is in itself more than in other graces, or, as if the act of believing, whether it alone, or jointly with other graces, were imputed unto us for righteousness, but only as it layeth hold on Jesus Christ, and giveth us a right to his righteousness, through the merit whereof alone we are justified; for it is "by the faith of Jesus Christ," or, faith receiving, John i. 12, and resting on Jesus Christ, Isa. xxvi. 3, 4, that we are justified; besides that all works of the law, or commanded by the law, are here excluded, and by consequence faith itself, as it is a work, is excluded also. Seventhly, This way of justification by free grace accepting of us for the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and not because of our own worth, is common to all who ever were, are, or shall be justified, whether good or bad. The most eminent and best of men must quit the conceit of their own righteousness, and rely upon Him who justifieth the ungodly by faith: for even those who "were Jews by nature," Paul and the other apostles betook themselves to this way. "Even we," saith he, "have believed in Jesus Christ;" and the scripture cited by Paul speaketh universally of all: "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Eighthly, Before man be justified through virtue of this imputed righteousness, he must first be convinced of his own utter inability to satisfy Divine justice, and so to be justified by any thing which himself can do. So natural is it to seek for a righteousness of our own and in ourselves, that we will never seek in earnest to the righteousness of Christ, until we be made to despair of ourselves, Rom. x. 3; for the apostle sheweth that this conviction went before their justification—"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law." Next, he must be con-

vinced also of a worth in Christ's merit to satisfy Divine justice, and that this merit of Christ's is offered to all who shall lay hold on it by faith, so as that it shall stand good in law for them in order to their absolution, as if they had given an equivalent satisfaction to God's justice themselves; for none will venture his immortal soul upon that the worth whereof he doth not know. Hence the apostle sheweth that the knowledge of this also did precede their justification: "Knowing that a man is not justified but by the faith of Jesus Christ." And, lastly, being thus convinced, he must by faith receive and rest upon Jesus Christ and that most perfect righteousness of his, by making his soul adhere and cleave to the word of promise, wherein Christ is offered, Acts ii. 39, 41, whereupon followeth the real justification and absolution of the man who so doth; for Paul marketh this as a third thing going before their justification: "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified."

4. The former practices of ancient believers, eminent for parts, privileges, and graces, who have quit their own righteousness, and ventured their soul wholly upon this imputed righteousness of Christ, laying hold upon it by faith, ought to be looked on as a strong argument enforcing us to do the like; for the apostle's scope is to prevail with those Galatians by this argument, "We who are Jews by nature," saith he, "have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified."

5. Though the approved practices of eminent godly persons may have their own weight in order to our encouragement to deny ourselves and lay hold on Christ, yet it is the word of the Lord which can only quiet a man's conscience in this matter, and make his mind fully acquiesce to it; for the apostle unto their example subjoineth a Scripture confirmation of the truth in hand: "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

VER. 17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

He preoccupieth an objection, which might have been framed against the present doctrine, thus: If the doctrine of justification by Christ doth suppose that even the Jews themselves, who are sanctified from the womb, are equally sinners with the Gentiles, and that being unable to attain to justification by the works of the law, they must only rely on Christ by faith, as Paul had but presently affirmed, ver. 16; then it would seem to follow that Christ were "the minister of sin," or that the doctrine of the gospel did make men sinners, both by taking away that righteousness of the law, which the Jews thought they had, and were warranted, as they conceived, by the Scriptures of the Old Testament so to think, as also by furnishing both Jew and Gentile with an occasion to cast by all care of holiness and good works, seeing that thereby they were not to be justified but by faith in Christ only—(see the like objection propounded, Rom. iii. 31,)—which objection the apostle answereth.

first, by repelling the inference as absurd and blasphemous in this verse, and next by confuting it in the following

DOCTRINES.

1. The ministers of Jesus Christ, in holding forth truth, would carefully foresee and prudently take off what atheistical, loose, or erring spirits do usually object against it, to make it odious: so doth Paul here: "But if while we seek," &c.

2. It is too usual for people to conceit too much of their external church privileges, as if by having them they had saving grace, and stood not in so much need of Christ's imputed righteousness as others; for this is that which the adversaries did stumble at, that the Jews by nature, who enjoyed so many rich privileges should be found sinners, and as unable to be saved by their own works as others: "For if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found also sinners."

3. Whatever be a man's privileges otherwise, he must, if so he would be justified by Christ, take his confidence off them, and reckon himself equal to the most vile and worthless sinners, in the point of inability to merit any thing from God by his own works: for, this is supposed, as that whereon their objection is grounded, and Paul doth pass it as granted, and speaketh only against their inference from it: "But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found also sinners."

4. It is no new prejudice, though a most unjust one, whereby the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and not by works, hath been unjustly loaded, that of its own nature it doth tend to foster people in sin. The Papists do object so now, and the false apostles did so of old: "Is therefore Christ the minister of sin?" say they, or, the doctrine preached by Christ the occasion of sin?

5. To take occasion from free grace, or the doctrine of it, to live in sin, is, so much as in us lieth, to make Christ the minister of sin, and therefore a thing which all Christian hearts should skunner at [loathe] and abominate: for, in the place of saying the doctrine of the gospel doth occasion sin, it is said, "Is Christ the minister of sin?" And Paul doth abominate the very thought of it, rejecting it as most blasphemous and absurd. "God forbid," saith he: it is a denial, joined with a detestation of the thing denied. So chap. iii. 21, and 1 Cor. vi. 15, Rom. ix. 14.

VER. 18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

The apostle refuteth the former inference, next, by some reason taken from that indissoluble tie which is betwixt justification and sanctification, which he holdeth forth in his own person; that he may hereby propose himself an example unto others. The first is, that Paul, in preaching the doctrine of justification, had jointly with it pressed the ruin and destruction of sin, as necessarily flowing from that doctrine: and therefore, if he should again build up sin, by

giving way to the practice of it, he should contradict himself in what he had preached, not walking according to the doctrine of the gospel, but contrary to it; and so himself should be the transgressor, and the gospel free from giving him any occasion so to be.

DOCTRINES.

1. The doctrine of justification by free grace cannot be rightly preached, except the doctrine of mortification and destroying of sin be jointly preached with it; for, the same faith which layeth hold on Christ for righteousness, doth rest upon him also for grace and strength to subdue corruption and sin, Acts xv. 9; and if he be not employed for the latter, he will not bestow the former: thus sin and corruption were those things which Paul destroyed, in so far as he did hold forth the most solid and ready way how to get them destroyed, while he taught the doctrine of justification: "If I build again the things which I destroyed."

2. From this it followeth, that the untender lives of those who profess this doctrine, do not reflect upon the doctrine, as if in itself it did give occasion or encouragement unto them so to live; but upon themselves, who do not make the right use of that doctrine, but abuse it, and walk quite contrary to what is prescribed by it: for so doth Paul infer: "For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor;" or, the fault is not in the doctrine, but in myself.

VER. 19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Here is a second reason by preoccupation of an objection; for they might say: The doctrine of justification, as taught by Paul, did free believers from the law, Rom. vii. 4, and therefore did give them encouragement to sin. The apostle answereth, by granting they were freed from the law, but denieth that inference deduced from it, upon two reasons: and his answer doth furnish us with three doctrines, which will further clear the meaning of the words. First, Paul and all believers are dead indeed to the law, that is, so as they put no confidence in their obedience to it for their justification, Phil. iii. 9, so, as they are freed from the condemning power of it, chap. iii. 13, and as by its rigorous exaction of perfect obedience under hazard of the curse, which we were not able to perform, it did make us desperate and careless, and so did occasionally provoke and stir up corruption in the heart, Rom. vii. 5, 6, "I am dead to the law." Secondly, It is the law itself which maketh them thus dead to the law; the curse of the law putting them so hard to it, that they are made to despair of getting heaven and salvation by their obedience to it, Rom. iii. 20, 21, and are forced to fly unto Christ, by being in whom they are freed from condemnation, Rom. viii. 1, and get their corruption so far mortified, as that it taketh not occasion to sin the more from the law's discharging of sin as it was wont, Rom. vi. 14, "For I through the law am dead to the law. And thirdly, Though believers are delivered from the law in the former respects, yet not as it is the rule of an holy life; for, the

very end of their freedom is, that being so delivered, they might by virtue of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them, live righteously and holily to the glory of God: for, saith he, "I am dead to the law that I might live unto God." By all which it doth evidently appear, that the doctrine of justification in itself doth give no encouragement to sin: which answereth the objection, and refuteth the blasphemous inference, which is made ver. 17.

VER. 20. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Here is a third reason to the same purpose with the former, showing more fully that justified persons are most strictly tied to mortify sin and lead an holy life, if so they walk according to the prescript of the doctrine of justification which was taught by Paul: for he, and by consequence all real believers, were "crucified with Christ," to wit, the old man of their indwelling corruption, Rom. vi. 6: it did receive the stroke of death by his death, he having by death redeemed them from the slavery of it, Tit. ii. 14, which crucifixion with Christ, doth not destroy the natural life of believers; for so Paul sheweth he did live: only the old man of corruption doth not live in them, so as to act them in what they do, but Jesus Christ doth live in them, he being united to them as the root to the branches, or head to the members, and furnishing them with spiritual life and motion, whereby the very natural life which they live, and those things which concern that life, are ordered and gone about by virtue of strength drawn from Christ, by faith in him: and the consideration of Christ's love to them, and his dying for them because he loved them, is a great inducement unto justified persons so to live. Now, this being true in Paul, and in some measure in all believers, and seeing the principles of the doctrine of justification did bind all to this, it is evident, that to affirm this doctrine did tend to foster sin, is but a foul-forged calumny.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Jesus Christ did die a most shameful, painful, and cursed death upon the cross, Gal. iii. 13, so in his dying he did stand, not as a private, but as a public person in the room and place of all the elect, for he was their surety, Heb. vii. 22, and died for them, John xi. 50; so that when they lay hold upon him by faith, and thereby are made one with him, Eph. iii. 17, the cross and passion of Christ, as to all those benefits which were purchased by it, whether in order to the removal of the guilt of sin, Matt. xxvi. 28, or to the subduing of its strength, and quickening of them in the way of holiness, 2 Cor. v. 15, or to the purchasing of life eternal for them, John iii. 16, is as verily made theirs, as if they had been crucified in their own persons: for, Paul saith of himself, as an instance of all believers, "I am crucified with Christ."

2. The former consideration of the believer's

right to Christ's purchase, in order to the subduing of sin, layeth a strong engagement on him, and giveth a great encouragement unto him to oppose, resist, and set about the mortification of sin in himself: for Paul maketh this an argument to prove that the doctrine of justification, in its own nature, is no friend to sin; because, according to the principles thereof, the justified person is "crucified with Christ."

3. God's infinite wisdom hath found out the way whereby the threatening of death, Gen. ii. 17, is fulfilled in the elect, so that they die, and yet their lives are spared; they die, and yet they live: for they are reckoned in law to have died, when Christ their surety died for them; so that he was taken, and they go free, John xviii. 8: thus is that riddle solved, which is here propounded by Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, yet I live."

4. Though notwithstanding of fulfilling the threatening of death upon the elect, they do live; yet upon their believing in Jesus Christ, the old man of corruption and power of sin is so far weakened in them, that it doth not bear the chief sway in their heart, to command, execute, and order all their actions, as formerly it did, Gen. vi. 5; for thus is that other riddle solved, which is here propounded, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I," to wit the old I: the body of death and corruption did not live in him, but was mortified, and the dominion thereof removed, Rom. vi. 14.

5. The doctrine of justification by free grace, revealed in the gospel, layeth on strong obligations upon the justified person to set about the whole duties of sanctification, not only those which relate to the mortifying of sin, but also to his quickening in the way of grace: both those must go together, and the justified man is obliged to both, and furnished with help and encouragement from the doctrine of justification to set about both: for Paul sheweth they were both conjoined in himself; the first, while he saith, "Not I live;" the second, while he saith, "Christ liveth in me:" whereby is meant his following the motions of Christ's Spirit, as the guide of his life, Rom. viii. 1; and this he speaketh of himself, as a thing that he was obliged unto, and furnished for by the doctrine of justification which he taught; otherwise he should not have refuted the calumny of his adversaries.

6. That Christians may live the spiritual life of grace, they must, 1. be united to Christ, and have Christ dwelling in them by faith, Eph. iii. 17; for, speaking of the spiritual life which he lived, he supposeth Christ to be in him; "But Christ liveth in me." 2. Besides this union with Christ, there must be a communication of influence from the Spirit of Christ to excite them unto, Cant. v. 2, enable them for, John xv. 5, make them persevere, Phil. i. 6, and effectually to order and direct them in, Phil. iv. 13, the practice of every thing that is spiritually good: for, this is to have Christ living in them, to wit, as the head in the members, or root in the branches, which do furnish the members and branches with all things necessary for life and growth: and Christ's quickening of believers in the way of grace, is frequently set forth by similitudes drawn from those, Col. ii. 19; John xv. 5.

3. The believer, if so he would live this spiritual life, must not only have the habit of faith in his heart, but also must keep it in daily exercise, so as first thereby to try what he is to do, if so it be warranted by the word of truth, and how it is to be circumstantiated, Rom. xiv. 23. Secondly, thereby to draw furniture from the Spirit of Christ for exciting, enabling, and directing him in the way of duty, 2 Cor. iii. 5. And, thirdly, to apply pardoning mercy for covering the defects of duty, when he hath gone about it, and for removing the guilt of all his other sins, Matt. vi. 11; for this is to "live by the faith of the Son of God," or, in the Son of God, which Paul speaketh of as a necessary ingredient in this spiritual life. 4. This spiritual life, and life of faith, must be extended not only to spiritual duties, and of God's immediate worship, but also to all the actions of our natural and temporal life, in so far as they fall under a command, even to our eating and drinking, 1 Cor. x. 31; duties of our lawful employments, Heb. xi. 33, and to our carriage under crosses, Heb. xi. 24, 25; for, by the life which Paul lived in the flesh, is meant this natural life, Heb. v. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 2; and his living this spiritual life of faith, was extended even to the things of that life; "The life which I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God."

7. As Jesus Christ did give himself a ransom for the elect, (see chap. i. 4,) so no worth in us, no good which he expecteth from us, or need which he stood in of us, but only love in him to us did move him so to do; "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

8. Though the full persuasion and assurance of Christ's special love unto, and his dying for me in particular, is not the very essence and being of saving faith, Eph. i. 13; for saving faith may be without it, Isa. l. 10; yet it is a thing which may be had without extraordinary revelation, the Spirit of God enabling the believer to discern in himself those graces (1 Cor. ii. 12) which are set down as marks of his special love and favour in Scripture, 1 John iii. 14—24, and bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, Rom. viii. 16; and this assurance should be aimed at in the right method by all, 2 Pet. i. 10; for Paul, speaking in the name of other believers, sheweth he had attained it; "Who loved me, and gave himself for me," saith he.

9. This full persuasion and assurance, in its own nature, is so far from making those who have it, loose the reins to wickedness and security, that upon the contrary, it serveth as a strong incitement to make them mortify sin, and live that spiritual life of faith which is here spoken of: for it served for this use unto Paul; "I live by the faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me."

VER. 21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Having removed the objection, the apostle proceedeth to establish justification by faith, and not by the works of the law, by a second argument,

to this purpose. If we be justified by the law, or works done in obedience to the law, then those two absurdities would follow: 1. God's free grace and favour should be rejected, despised, frustrated and made useless, (for the word signifieth all these,) and the reason of the consequence lieth in this, that if justification be by works, then it cannot be by grace, Rom. xi. 6. 2. Christ's death had been in vain without any necessary cause or reason, if the justification of sinners would have been attained by works or by any other mean.

DOCTRINES.

1. They who have attained unto the persuasion and full assurance of God's favour and love in Christ, ought above all others to maintain the glory of his grace and mercy in saving of sinners freely, not admitting of any thing, whether in practice or opinion, whether in themselves, or, so far as is possible, in others, which may encroach upon it, obscure it, or weaken the thoughts of the excellency of it in the minds of men: for Paul, who was persuaded of Christ's love, ver. 20, doth look upon this as his duty, flowing from that assurance; "I do not frustrate the grace of God," saith he.

2. The joining of works with faith in the matter of justification, is a total excluding of God's free grace and favour from having any hand in this work: for grace admitteth of no partner; so that if grace do not all, it doth nothing; if any thing be added to it, that addition maketh grace to be no grace, Rom. iv. 4; for the apostle, reasoning against those who would have made works to share with God's free grace and favour in justification, sheweth his joining with them in that opinion would be a total rejecting and making useless of God's grace; "I do not frustrate the grace of God."

3. That the apostle doth exclude in this dispute from having any influence in justification, the works, not only of the ceremonial, but also of the moral law, appeareth from this: that he opposeth the merit of Christ's death, to all merit of our own, whether by obedience to the one law, or to the other; neither can any reason be given for which our meriting by obedience to the ceremonial law maketh Christ to have died in vain, which is not applicable to the moral law: "For, if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain."

4. That he excludeth also, not only the works of the moral law, which are performed by the natural and unregenerate man, but also those which the godly do perform by virtue of faith drawing influence from Christ, appeareth from this, that the apostle useth this argument taken from the uselessness of Christ's death, not against the unconverted Jews, (who had not received the gospel, and so would easily have granted, that Christ was dead in vain,) but against those who had received the gospel, and so would never have pleaded that any works done by a natural man, but those only which flow from the grace of Christ, could justify a sinner; and yet Paul reasoneth against those, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

5. That he doth exclude also all works of ours

whatsoever from being the meritorious cause of our justification, not only in whole and their being alone, without the merit of Christ, but also in part and jointly with his merit, appeareth from the former ground that he is reasoning against professed Christians, who doubtless did give Christ's merit and death some share at least in justification; else the absurdity, which is deduced from their doctrine by Paul, should have had no weight with them, as being no absurdity in their mind; "Then Christ is dead in vain."

6. If there had been any other way possible in heaven or earth, by which the salvation of lost sinners could have been brought about, but by the death of Christ, then Christ would not have died; our disease was desperate as to any other cure: for, while he saith, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," he affirmeth two things; 1. That to suppose Christ hath died in vain, or without cause, is a great absurdity no ways to be admitted of. 2. If the justification and salvation of sinners could have been attained by works, or any other mean, then his death had been in vain; and so that it were an absurd thing to suppose he would have died in that case.

CHAPTER III.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle (having sharply rebuked these Galatians for their defection, ver. 1, useth five other arguments to prove that we are justified by faith, and not by works. First, they had received the saving graces of God's Spirit, by hearing the doctrine of justification by faith, and not by works, ver. 2. Which argument is further urged, ver. 3, 4, and enlarged unto their receiving these other miraculous gifts of the Spirit by the means of that doctrine, and as confirmations of it, ver. 5. Secondly, Abraham was justified by faith, ver. 6. From which he inferreth, that believers are Abraham's children, ver. 7, and that all of them, whether Jew or Gentile, must be justified by faith also, ver. 8, 9. Thirdly, those who seek to be justified by the law, are under the curse of the law; and therefore not justified, ver. 10. Fourthly, Scripture testifieth that men shall be justified by faith, ver. 11. Whence he inferreth and proveth his inference, that therefore they cannot be justified by the law, ver. 12. Fifthly, Christ's redeeming of us from the curse of the law, and all the fruits following upon his death, are received by faith, ver. 13, 14.

In the second part of the chapter, he answereth some objections, and jointly sheweth the date prescribed by God, for keeping the ceremonial law, was now past.

OBJECTIONS.

1. It seemeth the way of justification by faith in the promise made to Abraham was changed by the law given upon Mount Sinai. He answereth by a similitude taken from human covenants, ver. 15, that the covenant of grace made and ratified by God with Abraham in Christ, could

not be altered nor abrogated by the law, which was given so long after, ver. 16—18.

2. The law seemeth to be given in vain and to no purpose, if it do not justify. He answereth by showing another end for which the law was given, to wit, for the discovery and restraint of sin; and that God's design was not that people should be thereby justified, ver. 19, 20.

3. The law seemeth then to be contrary to the covenant-promise, if the one discover sin, and the other forgive and cover it. He answereth, first, retorting the objection against the propounders, to wit, that by their way the law would be contrary to, and destructive of the promise, ver. 21. Secondly, showing the law in discovering sin, and condemning for it, was subservient to the promise, while it did necessitate guilty sinners to believe, and apply the promise, ver. 22.

4. It seemeth the ceremonial law, and the whole ancient dispensation, ought to be observed under the gospel for the same use and end at least. He answereth, showing the law was for good use to the ancient church, ver. 23, which he illustrateth by comparing the law to a school-master, ver. 24, but denieth that therefore it should be observed now; because the church was come to perfect age, and so could not be any longer kept under a schoolmaster, ver. 25, 26.

5. It seemeth circumcision at least ought to be observed; seeing it was not added upon Mount Sinai, but instituted long before. He answereth, showing that baptism doth serve for all those spiritual uses now, which circumcision did serve for then; and consequently that circumcision was not to be any longer practised, ver. 27—29.

VER. 1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

The apostle (being to insist further upon the former dispute, lest their affections had been thereby rendered dead and dull) quickeneth them a little, by inserting a sharp reproof, wherein he chargeth them with folly, in that they had suffered themselves to be seduced, by a sort of spiritual sorcery or witchcraft, unto disobedience to the doctrine of the gospel; which disobedience he aggregeth from the perspicuity and plainness in which that doctrine was preached unto them, even such, as if Christ, together with his bloody passion, had been drawn and painted upon a board before them.

DOCTRINES.

1. The minister of Jesus Christ, when he is called to insist upon the clearing-up of truths unto the understanding, whether positively, by showing what is revealed in Scripture concerning them, or, controversially, by refuting contrary errors, would mix his discourse with an occasional word of exhortation, reproof, or somewhat of that kind, which may tend more immediately and directly to excite and quicken the affections of hearers, lest they otherwise wax dull

and languish : for Paul casteth in a sharp reproof in the midst of his dispute, "O foolish Galatians," &c.

2. Where the precious truths of the gospel are preached and disobeyed, people neither labouring to be persuaded of the truth in their understandings, Acts xvii. 32, nor to prize it in their heart and affections, Matt. xi. 17, nor to practise it in their life and conversation, Matt. vii. 26; this is a sin, the evil whereof cannot be sufficiently aggrieved, or spoken against, as being a sin against the remedy of sin, Heb. ii. 3; for this is the fault for which the apostle doth so sharply reprove those Galatians, even "that they did not obey the truth:" the word signifieth, the not believing of, and disobedience to the truth when it is believed.

3. Heretics, who by fair words deceive the simple, Rom. xvi. 18, are a kind of spiritual sorcerers; and heresy and error is spiritual witchcraft: for, first, as sorcerers, by deluding the senses, make people apprehend that they see what they see not; so heretics and erring spirits, by casting a mist of seeming reason before the understanding, do delude it, and make the deluded person believe that to be truth which is not, chap. i. 6, 7. And secondly, as sorcerers, in what they do of that kind, are in a singular manner assisted beyond the reach of their own ability and skill by the devil, who really doth the thing upon the sorcerers practising of some satanical ceremonies, which are prescribed unto them by the devil, as a watchword whereat he is ready to answer: so heretical spirits are often more than ordinarily assisted in drawing of multitudes after them, and this by Satan's concurring with them, 2 Thess. ii. 9. Thus the apostle, speaking of that influence which false teachers had upon them, in drawing them from the truth, he saith, "Who hath bewitched you?" It is a word borrowed from the practice of witches and sorcerers, who, being assisted by the devil, use to cast mist before the eyes to dazzle, and so delude them.

4. For a people to have the gospel among them, and not to make use of it, but to reject it, and make defection from it, argueth them to be fools indeed, whatever be their wisdom otherwise in things relating to this present life: for the doctrine of the gospel containeth saving wisdom, which maketh wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15, which wisdom they reject. Thus Paul calleth them "foolish Galatians," because they "obeyed not the truth."

5. Though neither ministers, nor any other, ought to charge men with folly, with a mind to reproach them, or in way of private revenge, Matt. v. 22; yet the minister of Jesus Christ, or any other who hath a call to it, may upbraid a man with folly, if, first, the party reprov'd be guilty of folly, as those Galatians were. Secondly, if the reproof flow from love and compassion in the person who doth reprove, and an honest desire after the sinner's good, as it was here: for he casteth not up their folly in passion, but in compassion, desiring nothing but their good and amendment. Thirdly, if the reproof carry along all lawful and allowed moderation with it, as here, he calleth them not wicked, but more

gently, foolish or imprudent, and withal layeth the great weight of their sins upon their seducers, who had bewitched them. And, fourthly, that the reprovor not only himself do know that there is reason so to charge them, but also hold forth these reasons to them, that they may be convinced also: for, so doth Paul, he demonstrateth their folly, from that they obeyed not the gospel, which was so plainly preached among them; "O foolish Galatians," &c.

6. Ministers ought not to rest upon a coldrife [inanimate] way of preaching truth, Matt. vii. 29, but are to endeavour the delivery of it with that perspicuity and plainness, Col. iv. 4, that power and liveliness, 1 Cor. ii. 4, as it may penetrate the conscience of the hearers, and be so clear and evident to them, as if it were pictured and painted out before their eyes: and in order to this, they would not only labour to understand thoroughly what they preach, 1 Tim. i. 7, but also to believe it themselves, 2 Cor. iv. 13, and to have their own affections in some measure warmed with love to it, 1 Tim. i. 15. And above all, would labour with God, that the effectual operation of his Spirit may come along with what they preach, 1 Cor. ii. 4, that so the truth delivered may be the more lively, and convincingly represented to the hearers: for Paul did so preach; "Jesus Christ was evidently set forth, crucified among them, before their eyes:" he did so represent Christ and him crucified to their ears, by the preaching of the word, as if they had seen him with their eyes.

7. Though Jesus Christ and his sufferings are to be painted out, vividly [vividly] represented and pictured by the plain and powerful preaching of the gospel; yet it doth not follow, that they are to be artificially painted with colours upon stone or timber, for religious use: for God commandeth the former, but condemneth the latter, Exod. xx. 4. And, the graven image is but a teacher of lies, Hab. ii. 18.

8. The more clearly and powerfully that the gospel hath been preached among a people, their defection from it, and not giving obedience to it, is the more aggrieved: for Paul aggregeth their not obeying the truth, from this, that "before their eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them."

VER. 2. This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

The apostle, having stirred them up to attention by a reproof, doth now return to his former dispute, proving that we are justified by faith, and not by works. (See chap. ii. 16.) And this he proveth, first, because the spirit of regeneration and other saving graces of the Spirit of God (called here the Spirit, as being fruits of the Spirit, chap. v. 22,) were wrought in those of them who were regenerate, not by the works of the law, that is, by the doctrine of justification by works, but by the hearing of faith, that is, by hearing the doctrine of justification by faith: for here, as usually elsewhere, (see chap. i. 23,) faith is taken for the doctrine that is believed: and for the truth of this assertion, he appealeth

to their own conscience and experience, leaving them to gather, that therefore they were justified and reconciled by the doctrine of faith, seeing God bestoweth his Spirit upon none but such as are reconciled unto him, Rom. v. 1, 2.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is not ordinarily any church so corrupt, but God hath some who are truly gracious among them; for Paul's argument supposeth that the Spirit, and saving graces of the Spirit, were in some of those Galatians, because of whom he speaketh generally unto all; "Received ye the Spirit?" saith he.

2. Even those who are truly gracious, may stagger strangely in reeling times, and be in a great measure overtaken with the most dangerous errors of the times, though they cannot totally (1 Pet. i. 23,) nor finally (Isa. liv. 7, 8,) fall away: for Paul speaketh even to them who had received the Spirit, as to those who were taken with the common errors; "Received ye the Spirit?"

3. As regeneration and saving grace is the work of God's Spirit in the elect; so the ordinary mean whereby he conveyeth grace to the heart, is, by hearing the word preached; for they had "received the Spirit by the hearing of faith."

4. Though the hearing of the law preached, doth work conviction of sin, terror of conscience, and legal contrition, Acts ii. 37, whereby the heart is in some sort prepared for receiving of the gospel; yet the law, as distinct from the gospel, and as it presseth perfect obedience in order to our justification before God, (in which sense it was mistaken by the false apostles, and is so spoken of in this dispute; see upon chap. ii. 15,) can never be a mean of begetting grace in the heart; for so it driveth the soul to despair, and worketh wrath, Rom. iv. 15. Thus the apostle affirmeth they "received not the Spirit by the works of the law."

5. It is the gospel preached and heard, which the Lord maketh use of, as a mean for conveying grace to the heart, being first convinced of sin and misery by the preaching of the law, Acts ii. 37, 38; for the gospel offereth Christ freely, from whom, being laid hold upon by faith, we do all receive grace for grace, John i. 16. Thus the apostle affirmeth they had "received the Spirit by the hearing of faith."

6. Though a gracious heart may be overtaken with error, as said is, (see Doct. 2.) yet there remaineth somewhat of conscience in vigour with them, in so far as that being appealed unto, about the truth of things weighty, and which belonged to the reality of God's work in their heart, and the way of his working in them, they dare not readily lie, and contradict their own known experience: for Paul at least supposeth so much, while he doth appeal to their own conscience and experience how saving grace was wrought in them; "This only would I learn of you, received ye," &c.

7. Our justification before God, and the renovation of our natures by the Spirit of God, are so much conjoined, that the doctrine which, through God's blessing, is the mean of working

the former, is also the only doctrine appointed of God, for holding forth the right way of attaining the latter: for Paul argueth, that the doctrine of justification, without works, is divine; because that doctrine was the mean of conveying sanctifying grace into their hearts; as appeareth from the scope of the argument here used, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

VER. 3. Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Here is an inference from the former verse, that seeing their beginning in the way of Christianity was spiritual, (the doctrine of justification by faith having communicated the Spirit of regeneration, and other graces, to them, as ver. 2,) it should be an act of extreme folly and madness in them to quit that doctrine, and to embrace the doctrine of justification by works, as if they could be perfected by it; seeing it is but a fleshly dead doctrine, and therefore is here called flesh, because flesh and corrupt nature do plead and stand for it, Rom. x. 3, and because it doth produce no spiritual effect, but rather the contrary, in the soul who doth embrace it, Rom. vii. 5.

DOCTRINES.

1. The text speaketh nothing against the doctrine of perseverance, as if those who were once renewed, and truly spiritual, might lose the Spirit of God altogether, and turn fleshly: for besides, first, that the apostle doth not positively assert that they were changed already, but only, by way of question, holdeth out the hazard which should follow upon their change; secondly, he speaketh not of a change of qualities or dispositions from good to bad, but in their judgment, from the doctrine of faith, here called the Spirit, to the doctrine of justification by works, here called flesh. Thirdly, though he did imply a change of qualities and disposition from spirit to flesh, and from holiness to sin, as a consequence of this change of judgment and opinion, yet there is nothing here importing that any total or final change of that kind, either had fallen, or could fall upon those who were truly gracious.

2. The doctrine maintained by the papists now, that faith in Jesus Christ doth begin our justification, in so far as it disposeth us unto good works, and that by those our justification is completed, is no new error, but that which hath been held of old, by these heretics who had seduced the Galatians, and whom Paul here refuteth: for he supposeth, that in answer to the present argument, they might readily affirm, that though the doctrine of faith (here called the Spirit, as 2 Cor. iii. 6) did begin the work; yet the doctrine of works, here called flesh, did perfect it; "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

3. The fore-mentioned doctrine hath so many absurdities following upon it, that the embracing of it doth argue no less than folly and madness: for justification by faith and works, cannot con-

sist, Rom. xi. 6, much less can the former take its perfection from the latter, the more noble from that which is more base: hence Paul condemneth it of folly; "Are ye so foolish? having begun," &c. saith he.

4. Our after-carriage, and walking in the things of God and religious matters, ought to be conformed to our good beginnings, which we once had in those; and the contrary hereof, is incomparable folly and madness: for he saith, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

VER. 4. Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

He cleareth what he said of the folly and madness, which is in following the way presently spoken of, by showing, if they should hold on to seek justification by works, or partly by faith, and partly by works, they would lose all the fruit of their former constancy and sufferings, sustained by them for that truth which he did now preach; this he speaketh not positively, but as it were doubtfully, and suspending its certainty, upon the hopes he had of their amendment.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the lot of those who profess truth, to suffer many things in the defence of it. (See chap. i. ver. 13, doct. 6.) The Galatians found the truth of this, "Have ye suffered so many things?"

2. They may suffer many things for truth, who afterwards will make foul defection from it: for, as the example of others, particular interest, wrapt up in the public, and the general applause which sufferers for truth do receive from the lovers of truth, will make even hypocrites suffer much; so, continued sufferings will make even the godly faint for a time; yea, the best, being left to themselves, in an hour of temptation, will turn their back upon truth, so that no engagements by a profession, no experience or remembrance of that joy and sweetness, which they have found in the way of truth, nor yet their former sufferings for truth, will make them adhere unto it: for these Galatians had suffered many things for the doctrine of justification by faith; yea, and had found much sweetness and satisfaction in it, chap. iv. 15, and yet now they have made defection from it; "Have ye suffered so many things in vain?"

3. Afflictions and sufferings for the truth, are very useful and profitable to the sufferers, though not to satisfy God's justice for sin, neither in its guilt nor punishment, neither eternal nor temporal; for these are fully done away in Christ, Isa. liii. 5; yet for other ends, as for the trial of their faith, 1 Pet. i. 7, for conforming them to Christ their head, Phil. iii. 10, who was a man of sorrows, Isa. liii. 3, for making them die to the world, chap. vi. 14, and to fit them for heaven; afflictions and crosses being the beaten way which leadeth to it, Acts xiv. 22; for while he saith, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain?" he importeth their sufferings would have been useful for them, if they themselves had not hindered it.

4. Whatever have been the sufferings of a

people or person for truth, they are all in vain, lost, and to no purpose, as to any thing which can be expected from God to the party who hath suffered, if so he make defection from, and turn his back upon truth afterwards: for Paul insinuateth this as an undoubted truth, while he saith, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain?"

5. Though those who have suffered much for truth, should afterward make defection from it, we are nevertheless to keep charity towards them, as hoping God will give them repentance, and reclaim them: yea, all our sharpness towards them, whether in aggreging their sin, or in holding out the terrible consequences which are deserved by, and probably will follow upon, their sin, ought to be wisely tempered, by expressing those charitable thoughts which we have of them: for so doth the apostle here, while, speaking of these Galatians, who had formerly suffered much for truth, and threatening them for their present defection with the loss of all those advantages which they might have expected from their sufferings, he suspendeth the certainty of the threatening, upon their hoped-for repentance; "If it be yet in vain," saith he.

VER. 5. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth* he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

He again returneth to the argument for justification by faith, set down ver. 2, and enlargeth it thus, that the Lord had not only accompanied that doctrine among them with the fruits of the Spirit of regeneration and saving graces, wrought by it, but also with other extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as the working of miracles, speaking with strange tongues, curing of diseases, which were so many confirmations that the doctrine was of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the saving graces of God's Spirit are conveyed to the hearts of hearers by the preaching of the gospel; yet God is the author and worker of them, and the gospel only a mean by which he worketh: for, having spoken of their receiving the Spirit, when he first pounded this argument, ver. 2, he doth here in the resuming of it, explain how they received it, to wit, by God's bestowing of it; "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit."

2. When the doctrine of the gospel, as it is now dispensed under the New Testament, did first break up, the Lord, to confirm the truth thereof, did accompany the preaching of it with the working of miracles, (which properly are works above nature's strength, and so could be wrought by none but God,) and this, that hereby the truth of the doctrine might be confirmed, which being once sufficiently done, there is no further use for miracles now; for the apostle sheweth that miracles were wrought among the Galatians, by the hearing of faith, and that this was one argument of the divinity of that doctrine, while he saith, "He that worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

3. So strong and prevalent is the spirit of error, where it is letten loose, and so weak are the best in themselves to resist it; that for love to error they will quit truth, though formerly never so much confirmed and sealed unto them, by the saving fruits of God's Spirit in their hearts accompanying it: for though these Galatians had the doctrine of justification plainly preached, ver. 1, and sealed to them by the saving graces of God's Spirit, and by many miracles wrought among them; yet they make defection from it: "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you," &c.

VER. 6. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Having put a close to that argument, which he brought from their own experience, proving that we are justified by faith and not by works, he addeth another from a scripture example of Abraham, to confirm the same truth, who, though he did abound in many virtues and good works, yet he was not justified by these, but by faith only; which he proveth by the testimony of Moses, Gen. xv. 6, where it is affirmed, that "Abraham believed in the Lord," to wit, not only by giving assent unto the promise spoken of immediately before about the multiplication of his seed, and giving unto them the land of Canaan, Gen. xv. 5-7, but by assenting unto, and embracing of the prime promise of the covenant made by God with him, that in the Messias, who was to come of him, he himself and the nations were to be blessed, Gen. xii. 3, of which promise, this of the multiplication of his seed was but a dependent, and the means to effectuate it; which faith of Abraham's, or the thing believed and laid hold upon by Abraham's faith, to wit, the obedience of the Mediator the blessed seed, was imputed unto him for righteousness, or accepted of God as his obedience for his justification, ver. 6; from which he inferreth, or rather, the matter being so evident, he exciteth themselves to infer the conclusion, which he intendeth to prove: That only they who are of the faith, or seek after justification by faith, are children of Abraham, by following of his steps, and succeeding to him in the inheritance of that blessing of free gifted righteousness, and justification thereby, which he enjoyed; for an equivalent phrase to this here, is that which is, ver. 9, "They are blessed with faithful Abraham," ver. 7.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though saving faith hath for its general object the whole word of God, consisting of histories, threatenings, commands, and promises, both of temporal and eternal blessings; for faith giveth firm assent unto the whole word, because of that divine authority which revealeth it, Acts xxiv. 14; yet the principal object of justifying faith, is the word of promise holding forth Christ and his righteousness, as the meri-

torious cause of the believer's salvation: for this promise which Abraham did believe, and the faith whereof was imputed to him for righteousness, had Jesus Christ in its bosom, it being a promise of giving unto Abraham a numerous seed, Gen. xv. 4, 5; and so a promise of Jesus Christ to come of him, in whom all the nations, Acts iii. 25, and Abraham himself, ver. 9, were to be blessed: "Even as Abraham believed God."

2. That it may go well with a soul, and be accepted in God's sight, who can endure no unclean thing, Hab. i. 13, it is necessary that it be clothed with some righteousness of one sort or other: for, "faith was accounted unto Abraham for righteousness."

3. It being wholly impossible for fallen man to attain unto that personal, perfect righteousness which the law requireth, Rom. iii. 10, &c. the wisdom of God hath found out another way of making him righteous, to wit, that, whereby faith is imputed, reckoned or accounted unto him for righteousness: for, "Abraham's faith was accounted unto him," to wit, by God, "for righteousness."

4. Faith is not in a proper sense imputed to the believer for righteousness, as if the work of faith itself were imputed to us, and accepted of God, whether freely, or because of the merit of Christ, for our total and perfect righteousness; but it is imputed in a figurative sense, with respect had to that which faith apprehendeth and layeth hold upon, to wit, the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ; these being laid hold on by faith, become our righteousness, Rom. v. 19, and x. 4; for the apostle, all along this chapter, opposeth faith and works: now his arguments would be of no force, if faith did justify as a work, and for any worth in itself; "It was accounted to him for righteousness."

5. In the matter of justification, faith is opposed not only to those works which go before conversion, but to those also which follow after it, and are the real fruits of God's Spirit in the believer: all works, whether of the one sort or other, are excluded; for even to Abraham many years after his conversion, when he had abounded in good works, and many gracious virtues, Gen. xii.—xiv., "his faith was accounted for righteousness."

6. As there is a second and reiterated justification of one and the same person in this sense, that upon our renewed apprehending of the promise by faith, the sentence of our absolution and adjudication to life eternal, is also renewed; so this second justification is not upon the account, or for the merit of our good works, no more than the former. It is always faith that justifieth: for Abraham who was justified long before, upon a renewed act of his believing, hath his faith of new, and not his works, "imputed to him for righteousness."

7. The godly under the Old Testament, and the godly under the New, are justified one and the same way: as we are justified freely, Rom. iii. 24, so were they, Isa. xlii. 25; as we are justified fully, and absolved both from the guilt and punishment of sin, 1 John i. 7, Rom. viii. 1, so were they, Isa. liii. 5; otherwise the apostle could

not argue from Abraham's justification to ours, as he doth here; "Know ye therefore," saith he, "that they which are of the faith," &c.

8. They "who are of the faith," or who seek after justification by faith, are Abraham's children and his seed; they who are members of the visible church, and profess the doctrine of faith, are his children outwardly, because they walk in the steps of their father Abraham, by professing of, and assenting to that doctrine of faith which he believed, Rom. iv. 12, whereby they have title to the covenant of grace, Acts ii. 39, Rom. xi. 16, 17; which title of theirs to the covenant, implieth a right to enjoy all divine ordinances, Acts ii. 38, 39, whereof they are capable, and from which they do not bar themselves by ignorance, 1 Cor. xi. 28; or scandal, Matt. xviii. 17. It implieth also all external church privileges leading unto salvation, Rom. ix. 4; yea, and a right to salvation itself, upon God's terms, required in the gospel, John iii. 16; in which respect, salvation is said to be of the Jews, John iv. 22. They again, who do not only profess the doctrine of faith, but also embrace it in their hearts, by the grace of saving faith, are Abraham's children inwardly; because, they have not only a title to the covenant of grace, but also come up to the conditions required in it; and so do walk in the steps of saving faith and repentance, wherein Abraham walked, who is held forth as a pattern and father for imitation unto others, whereby they enjoy not only outward privileges, but also saving benefits and blessings, and have not only a conditional, but an absolute and actual right unto heaven and glory, the covenanted inheritance of Abraham's children, Heb. xi. 12—16. This distinction of Abraham's children outwardly and inwardly, is founded upon Rom. ii. 28, 29, and is necessary, as for the right understanding of other places of Scripture, so of this, "They which be of the faith, are the children of Abraham."

VER. 8. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Because the former consequence from Abraham's justification to ours, might be questioned to hold in the Gentiles, who were not of Abraham's posterity, therefore the apostle doth clear it from the words of the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, that in him, or in his seed, Jesus Christ, who was to come of him, Gen. xxii. 18, all the nations or Gentiles were to be blessed; which promise, he sheweth, was no other than the gospel or glad tidings, that all the blessings to be purchased by Christ, Abraham's seed, (among which justification by faith was one,) were to be bestowed by God upon the Gentiles, and that the Scripture, or Spirit which speaks in Scripture, foreknowing, to wit, in the decree, that God was to do so, did contrive the promise in these words, of purpose that it might bear so much, ver. 8; from which he inferreth that all

believers indefinitely, the nations not excluded, but included, do partake of all those saving blessings which Abraham did partake of, by faith, among which free justification was the chief; for of that is the question, ver. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. That Scripture is not an invention of man, but the word of the all-knowing God, appeareth from this, that several things are foretold therein, which had their accomplishment a long time afterwards, according as they were foretold, the knowledge of which things at so great a distance of time, could not be in any but God, Isa. xli. 22, 23; for the calling of the Gentiles, and their justification by faith, was foretold about the space of two thousand years before it fell out; "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith."

2. The foreknowledge of future events, at the greatest distance, doth most properly and peculiarly belong unto God, which doth always suppose his will and decree that such things shall come to pass; in which decree of his, he doth foreknow them, Acts ii. 23. Whatever foresight of this kind is in any of the creatures, they have it by borrowed light from him, and (as we say) by lighting their candles at his torch; for the foreknowing that the Gentiles would be justified by faith, is attributed to Scripture, or the Spirit of God speaking in Scripture; "And the Scripture foreseeing," &c.

3. The calling of the Gentiles, and their attaining to salvation by free grace, and all the spiritual privileges of Abraham's seed, was a thing hardly credible at the first breaking forth of the gospel, the case of all nations, except the Jews, seemed to be so desperate and damnable, Eph. ii. 11, 12. Hence the apostle seeth it necessary, upon all occasions almost, to clear, that the calling of the Gentiles had ground from Scripture, as here, "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith."

4. Hence we learn several things tending to the right understanding of that promise made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, "In thee, or in thy seed," Gen. xxii. 18, to wit, Christ, "all nations shall be blessed." As first, that the covenant of grace made with Abraham, whereof this promise is one article, was extended not only to Abraham's carnal seed, but to all believers in every place, even among the Gentiles; for "in thee all nations shall be blessed." Secondly, All men by nature, and considered without respect had to, and as not having interest in this gracious covenant made with Abraham in Christ, are destitute of all blessings under the drop of God's wrath and curse, Eph. ii. 3, and so are really cursed; for this is imported, while he saith, "in thee," and not otherwise, "all nations shall be blessed." Thirdly, That we who by nature are cursed creatures, should be freed from the curse, and do partake of the contrary blessing, it cometh to pass by virtue of that gracious covenant made with Abraham; and more particularly, it is through Jesus Christ, Abraham's seed, in whom we, being engrafted by faith, are delivered from the curse, ver. 13; for "In thee, or in thy seed, all nations shall be blessed," Gen. xxii. 18.

Fourthly, The blessings promised to Abraham's seed, in the covenant made by God with him, were not only temporal, carnal, and appertaining to this life, but heavenly and spiritual. The former indeed were often inculcated upon the ancient church, Deut. xxviii. 2, 3, &c., not as if these had been all or the main blessings of the covenant, but as they were shadows only of things more heavenly, Heb. xi. 14—16, for the apostle explaineth one part at least of the blessings promised, to be justification by faith; "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith, saith, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Fifthly, The man who is justified by faith, is a blessed man; and there is no blessedness under the sun comparable unto this, for a man to have his sin pardoned, Psal. xxxii. 1, and the righteousness of Christ imputed unto him, and so to be placed in a state of favour with God; for the apostle expoundeth the blessing promised, by being justified: "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen by faith." Sixthly, This promise made to Abraham containeth in it the sum of the gospel, to wit, the glad tidings of all spiritual blessings, and particularly of a free-gifted righteousness purchased by Christ, to be bestowed upon all who by faith should be ingrafted in Christ, and that the Gentiles should have access, in the days of the gospel, to these blessings among the rest; for the promise holdeth out all this, and Paul calleth the revealing of this promise the preaching of the gospel; "The Scripture preached before the gospel unto Abraham." Seventhly, The gospel therefore is no new doctrine, but the same in substance with that which was taught to Abraham, and to the church under the Old Testament; for, saith he, "The Scripture preached before the gospel unto Abraham." Eighthly, Though the gospel, or glad tidings of salvation, was not unknown to the ancient church, yet it was but a very small glimmering light which they had of it, in comparison with what we do now enjoy: all that Scripture recordeth Adam and the patriarchs to have had of it, was in that obscure promise, Gen. iii. 15; and all that Abraham had of it, was in this promise here mentioned, which, though it was much clearer than the former, because the day-light of the gospel under the New Testament was then drawing nearer, yet it was far short in clearness and plainness of these gospel promises which we do now enjoy, as John iii. 16. "Scripture preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Ninthly, The blessing of justification by faith, and of other spiritual favours promised to the nations in Abraham, was such, as Abraham was not the author of it, but a sharer in it with the rest of those to whom it was promised; so he inferreth from the blessing promised to Abraham, "That we are blessed with faithful Abraham."

5. Eminent privileges bestowed by God upon particular persons, do not exempt them from walking to heaven in the common pathway with others, if so they look for it at all; for Abraham, though highly privileged to be the father of believers, ver. 7, in whom all nations were to be blessed, Gen. xii. 3, yet behoved to enjoy the

blessing, not because of his own merit, but freely and by faith as well as others, as is imported in the epithet of faithful given to Abraham; "We are blessed with faithful Abraham," not with circumcised, virtuous Abraham.

6. God, in bestowing of blessings promised upon condition of faith, doth not so much look upon the greatness of faith, as the truth and sincerity of it; for though every one "who are of faith," believe not so strongly as Abraham did, "yet they are blessed with faithful Abraham."

VER. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Here is a third argument, to prove that we are justified by faith and not by works, because they who seek to be justified by the works of the law are under the curse of God, and so not justified; which he proveth, because, according to Scripture, Deut. xxvii. 26, the law pronounceth the curse upon every man who fulfilleth not the whole law in every tittle or jot of it; now he taketh it for granted that none fulfil the whole law, and so doth leave unto them to gather that the law doth fasten the curse upon all who seek justification by it.

DOCTRINES.

1. That Paul doth mean the works not only of the ceremonial law, but also of the moral, all along this dispute, while he excludeth works from being the cause of justification, appeareth from the scripture here cited, which is verified mainly in the moral law, as it appeareth from these sins in particular, against which the Levites were to denounce the curse, all of them being transgressions of the moral law, Deut. xxvii. 15, 16, &c. to the end; "For it is written, Cursed is every one."

2. Fallen man is so far from attaining to a state of favour with God, and happiness here or hereafter, by any works which he can do, that when he hath done the utmost, even of what his natural strength or renewed faculties of grace can reach, if he seek to be justified by it, he remaineth under God's curse and wrath, notwithstanding all; for the apostle affirmeth universally of all "that are of the works of the law," that is, who seek to be justified by works done in obedience to the law, (for therein was the great controversy,) that "they are under the curse."

3. The cursed estate of man by nature through sin and misery, together with that impossibility he lieth under to be recovered from that woeful estate, and to regain a state of favour with God by any work of righteousness which he doth, is a thing known, not by the discoursing of natural reason, which being blind in the things of God, cannot judge aright neither of its own misery nor of the way of recovery from it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The knowledge of those is borrowed from Scripture light, whose sentence alone is to be stood to in this matter. Hence Paul appealeth to Scripture for probation of what he hath herein

affirmed; "For it is written," saith he, "Cursed is every one."

4. Every sin, even the least, as being a wrong done against God, Jam. ii. 11, who is infinite in all his attributes, Job xi. 7—9, and a transgression of his holy and righteous law, 1 John iii. 4, Rom. vii. 12, deserveth no less than that the curse of God should light upon the sinner; under which curse is comprehended all the miseries of this life, Lam. iii. 39, death itself, Rom. vi. 23, and the pains of hell for ever, Matt. xxv. 41, 46, for so the Scripture cited affirmeth, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," that is, who transgresseth in one thing.

5. There is no person, whether rich or poor, noble or ignoble, learned or unlearned, whose sin deserveth not the forementioned curse. The consideration, indeed, of the person of some sinners, doth aggregate [aggravate] their sin beyond the sin of others, Rom. ii. 17—23; but no consideration of the person of any can so far extenuate his sin as to make it not deserving of God's wrath and curse; for, saith he, "Cursed is every one," without exception, "who continueth not."

6. Not only sins of commission, or doing of that which the law forbiddeth, but also sins of omission, or the leaving undone of what the law commandeth, do deserve the curse; for, saith he, "Cursed is every one," not only who doth what the law forbiddeth, "but who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."

7. It is not the bare knowledge of our duty, nor yet a fair profession of love and respect to our duty so known, which cometh up to that exact righteousness that the law requireth under hazard of the curse; there must be practice also according to that knowledge; for "Cursed is every one who continueth not to do them."

8. This real obedience and practice that the law of God requireth under hazard of the curse, is universal, extending itself to the conscience-making of all duties commanded, together with the way wherein they are commanded, Matt. xv. 8, and to the abstaining from all sins forbidden, together with their occasions, Job xxxi. 1; for "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things," he saith not, in some things only.

9. This obedience required is also constant, from the first minute of a man's life to the hour of his death; so that though he should but once sin, he is under the curse; for "Cursed is every one who continueth not to do them."

10. It is altogether impossible for any one of fallen mankind, either of himself, John xv. 5, or by any grace received in this life, 1 John i. 8, to keep the law perfectly, or to attain to that exact measure of righteousness that the law requireth, which appeareth not only from what the law requireth, as it hath been formerly cleared, but also from this, Paul takes it here for a confessed and granted conclusion; for if any could keep the law, then every man who seeketh to be justified by the works of the law should not be cursed, providing they did what they could, as Paul here affirmeth, seeing the law doth curse none but those who do not keep the law; "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written," &c.

11. Though every man doth break the law, and so deserveth that curse which is pronounced against sin by the law; yet all are not left to perish under this curse; some are delivered from it, to wit, those that "are of faith," or who by faith lay hold on Jesus Christ for righteousness, who was made a curse for them, ver. 13, such having fled from the sentence and curse of the law, and laid hold on the covenant of grace revealed in the gospel, shall be judged, not by the law, but the gospel, which admitteth of the righteousness of a cautioner imputed, Phil. iii. 9, instead of an exact personal righteousness required by the law; for, saith the apostle, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," and so, not they who are of faith.

12. Those who do not betake themselves to the covenant of grace must stand and fall according to the sentence of the law, or covenant of works; and therefore seeing the law doth curse them, (as not having come up to the exact righteousness required in it,) cursed are they, and cursed shall they be; for, saith he, "They who are of the law," or seek justification by the law, "are cursed;" because the law seeketh more than they can perform.

VER. 11. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

12. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doth them shall live in them.

In these verses is the fourth argument, to prove the negative part of the main conclusion, to wit, that no man is justified in God's sight, (who judgeth not according to outward appearance, but according to truth, 1 Sam. xvi. 7,) by his personal obedience to the law; and that because righteousness and life cometh from faith, as he proveth from Habak. ii. 4, and therefore not from the law, ver. 11. The force of which consequence, as the apostle declareth, doth lie in this, that "the law is not of faith," that is, the way of justification which the law prescribeth, (to wit, the law, as strictly taken for the mere precepts, legal promises, and threatenings of the law, see chap. ii. ver. 15,) doth not consist with the way of justification by faith, because the law promiseth life to him only who observeth what the law prescribeth, and so hath a perfect inherent righteousness, as he proveth from Lev. xviii. 5: but faith conveyeth life to him who is destitute of that righteousness, if he believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly by faith, as he hath cleared frequently before, (see Rom. iv. 5,) and so doth not express it now, ver. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is a twofold justification of a sinner; one which is in the sight of God, and is here expressed, whereby he is reputed and standeth righteous and just in the estimation of God the Judge, whose judgment is unerring, and always according to truth, Jer. xi. 20; another, which is before men, and is here implied, whereby the sinner is reputed and standeth righteous in the estimation of men, whose judgment, as flowing from charity, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, and grounded upon

outward appearance, 2 Sam. xvi. 7, may frequently err and be deceived; "But that no man is justified in the sight of God."

2. Though God do not justify any, or esteem of him as righteous for any works done in obedience to the law, yet that a man may be justified in man's sight because of his works, is not here denied by the apostle; for justification before men is nothing else but a charitable judgment passed upon the person, that God hath justified him by faith, which judgment is grounded upon the evidences of the person's faith, manifested in the fruits of good works, Jam. ii. 18: "But that no man is justified by the law in God's sight," &c.

3. The spirit of error being once given way to, doth so far blind the understanding, Isa. xlv. 20, that it cannot see, and so far engage the will and affections to the maintaining of it, 2 Tim. iv. 3, that the person erring will not see what Scripture saith against that error, though it be never so evident to an indifferent eye; for though the maintainers of justification by works would not or could not see it, yet the Scriptures even of the Old Testament did give clear testimony against that error, and for the contrary truth. "It is evident," saith Paul, "for the just shall live."

4. The doctrine of justification by faith, and not by works, is no new-fangled opinion; the Scriptures even of the Old Testament give testimony to it, as the only way of justification before God, which then was; for Paul proveth that none are justified by the law, from an Old Testament scripture, cited out of Hab. ii. 4, "The just shall live by faith."

5. The Scripture cited teacheth, first, That the way of justifying a sinner, or of making him righteous under the Old Testament, and under the New, is the same; and therefore we may safely draw arguments from the one to the other; for so doth the apostle here, "It is evident; for the just shall live by faith." Secondly, Faith in God and his promises, especially these wherein Jesus Christ and his righteousness are offered, is that which maketh a sinner just and righteous in God's sight; for the words may be rendered thus, "The just by faith shall live;" so that they show what that is which makes a man just and righteous. Thirdly, The man who is thus just by faith, is recovered from that state of death wherein every man by nature lieth, Eph. ii. 1, and doth live; which life of his doth also flow from faith; for both righteousness and life are here ascribed to faith; "The just shall live by faith." Fourthly, This life by faith which the believer doth enjoy, is such as furnisheth him with comfortable through-bearing in the midst of hardest dispensations, without apostasy and fainting, in so far as he doth not walk by present sense, but taketh up God as reconciled to him in Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 18, and looketh upon his present cross as an evidence of God's fatherly love, Heb. xii. 6, and knoweth it will have a blessed event to him in God's way and time, Rom. viii. 28, and that his life is hid with God in Christ, Col. iii. 3, far above the reach of any trouble; for this is the prophet's scope, from whom this place is cited, even to show that the just shall so live by faith as to ride out the storm arising

from the present trouble, which was to overwhelm others. (See Hab. ii. 4.) "The just shall live by faith." Fifthly, This life of the believer which he enjoyeth by faith, though it be begun here in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, John xvii. 3, and in freedom from the deserved sentence of death, Rom. viii. 1, whereupon followeth a right to eternal life, John iii. 3, and in the lively practice of all commanded duties, to which the believer is enabled by drawing life and virtue out of Christ through faith, Phil. iv. 13; yet this life is not circumscribed with the present time, it is to be perfected afterward in glory, so that the life flowing from faith is a lasting, never-ending, ever-continuing and eternal life; for the promise is extended unto all imaginable future duration, without any restriction. "The just shall live by faith."

From ver. 12, learn, 1. Though the law and faith, or the gospel which is the doctrine of faith, be not contrary to each other, (both of them being the truths of God,) but are mutually subservient one to another in many things; the law making sin known, Rom. iii. 20; the gospel holding forth the remedy of sin, John i. 29; the law pointing forth our need of Christ, Rom. x. 4; and the gospel giving us an offer of Christ for life and righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. The law, again, holding forth those duties wherein the man, made righteous by faith, ought to walk, and to testify his thankfulness, Eph. v. 1, 2; and the gospel, or faith in Jesus Christ offered in the gospel, furnishing him with spiritual strength to walk in these duties which the law prescribeth, 2 Cor. iii. 6; yet the law and faith are mutually inconsistent in the point of justification; so that if justification be sought by the works of the law it cannot be had by faith, and if it be had by faith it cannot be attained by the works of the law; there can be no mixture of law and gospel, faith and works, in this matter: for in this sense the apostle affirmeth, "The law is not of faith."

2. The law doth offer life to none upon easier terms than perfect obedience, and the constant and universal practice of whatsoever the law prescribeth; for the voice of the law is, "The man that doth them, to wit, those things that the law enjoineth, "shall live in them," or attain eternal life by his so doing.

3. The way of justification by faith doth wholly exclude our doing and works, and those of every sort, from having influence as causes or conditions, either in part or in whole, upon our justification before God: for the apostle proveth the inconsistency of the law and faith in the point of justification from this, that the law suspendeth our right to life upon the condition of doing and works; and therefore the way of justification by faith must wholly exclude works, else the apostle should not cogently have proved the thing intended, to wit, that the law is inconsistent with faith, from this, "That he who doth them shall live in them."

VER. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

He addeth a fifth argument to prove the affirmative part of the main conclusion, to wit, that we are justified by faith; and withal sheweth how faith doth justify, not for any merit or worth in itself, but as it receiveth Jesus Christ, whereby all the blessings purchased by him are applied to believers: for the apostle, obviating an objection which he foresaw might arise from ver. 10, (to wit, if the law do curse all men, how then are any freed from the curse?) sheweth, that Jesus Christ hath delivered us from God's wrath, or the sentence of the law's curse, by taking upon himself the curse due to us, while he was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, Phil. ii. 8; which kind of death was pronounced to be accursed, as he proveth from Deut. xxi. 23: this is contained ver. 13. And hence he shows a double fruit did flow: the first, to the Gentiles, the blessing of church privileges, divine ordinances, and of reconciliation, adoption, grace here, and glory hereafter, promised to the nations in Abraham, Gen. xxii. 18, being now purchased by Christ, and residing in him as the head and fountain, did come through him to the unrighteous Gentiles, who before the time of Christ's death were strangers to Christ, and to Abraham's blessing purchased by Christ, Eph. ii. 12. The second fruit of Christ's death did accresce [accrue] to the Jews (among whom he reckoneth himself) jointly with the Gentiles, who, being by Christ's death joined in one, did enjoy the promise of the Spirit, or the spiritual promise, as being now denuded of these earthly and external ceremonies wherewith it was veiled formerly, and set forth in its native and spiritual beauty and lustre: both which fruits of Christ's death he sheweth are conveyed unto, and enjoyed by, both Jews and Gentiles only by faith. So that the apostle in these two verses doth not only prove the main conclusion, that faith, laying hold on Christ, is that which delivereth from the law's curse, and which conveyeth Abraham's blessing, together with the covenant promise, unto us, and so doth justify us; but also indirectly, and (as it were) at the by, hinteth at two other truths, tending also to clear the main controversy between him and his adversaries, which, therefore, he is to assert more directly afterwards; to wit, first, That now, after Christ's death, the Gentiles being called by the gospel, were to be joined in one body with the Jews, and both of them to make up one seed to Abraham, and equally to partake of Abraham's blessing, whereof free justification through faith, spoken of ver. 9, was a main part. And, secondly, that the covenant promise (that God would be a God to Abraham and to his seed, Gen. xvii. 7,) was now, after Christ's death, to be held forth more clearly and spiritually; the types and shadows of earthly ceremonies, and of that legal dispensation under which it was formerly hid, being laid aside.

From ver. 13, learn, 1. The threatenings of the law, denouncing a curse against those who

yield not personal obedience to it, did not exclude or forbid a surety to come in the sinner's room, and to undergo the curse due unto him: for though it be clear, from ver. 10, that the law doth curse all, yet this impeded not but Christ might come "to redeem us from the curse of the law; being made a curse for us."

2. Every man by nature, the elect not excepted, Eph. ii. 3, are under the sentence of the law's curse, whereby in God's justice they are under the power of darkness, Col. i. 13, slavery and bondage to sin and Satan, Eph. ii. 2, so to remain until they be cast in utter darkness, Jude 13; except delivery and redemption do intervene: for while it is said, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," it is supposed that by nature we are under it.

3. There is no delivery of enslaved man from this woeful bondage, but by giving satisfaction and by paying of a price for the wrong done to divine justice, either by himself, or by some surety in his stead: God's fidelity, Gen. ii. 17, his righteous nature, Psa. xi. 6, 7, and the inward desert of sin, Rom. i. 32, do call for it; for "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law:" the word signifieth to deliver by giving a price.

4. It is not in the power of fallen man to acquire a ransom for himself, by any thing he can either do or suffer, whereby justice may be satisfied, and he delivered from this state of slavery and bondage. "The redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever," (to wit) among men, Psa. xlix. 8; for if man could redeem himself, Christ had not been put to it "to redeem us from the curse of the law."

5. Jesus Christ, the second person of the blessed Trinity, hath undertaken this great work of redeeming captive man from his slavery and bondage, and accordingly hath accomplished it. The work was indeed undertaken at the appointment of all the Persons, Luke i. 68, to whom also the price was paid, Eph. v. 2, only the execution of this work was by that wise design of sending the second Person in the flesh to become man; that so he might not only have right as our near kinsman, Ruth iii. 12, 13, but also be fitted to redeem, as having a price to lay down for our ransom, Heb. x. 5: "Christ hath redeemed us."

6. Our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is true God, who, being man's Creator, and having entered a covenant of friendship with man at the beginning, by virtue whereof he had interest in man, not only as his creature, but as one in a state of friendship with himself; from which blessed state man did fall, Eccles. vii. 29, and so brought himself and all his posterity, 1 Cor. xv. 21, to this state of bondage wherein he now is: for so much is imported while Christ is said to "redeem;" redemption being properly of those things which once were our own, but for the time are lost: "Christ hath redeemed us," saith he.

7. This work of man's redemption, undertaken and accomplished by Christ, was a redemption properly so called; our freedom and delivery being obtained, not by power or strong hand merely, nor yet coming from the sole condescension and pity of the injured party, without seeking reparation for former injuries; but by the

payment of a sufficient price, and by giving a just satisfaction to a provoked God; as appeareth not only from the word rendered "redeem," which, as said is, signifieth "to buy with a price;" but also from this, that the price is condescended upon, to wit, Christ's undergoing the curse of the law due to us; and this he did "for us," that is, not only for our good, but also in our room and stead: for by his undergoing this curse we are freed from it, so that although to buy or redeem, be sometimes taken improperly, and doth signify to obtain a thing without any price, Isa. lii. 3, yet what is presently said, and other circumstances do evince, that in this work of redemption performed by Christ, the word must be taken properly, for a delivery obtained by a payment of a just price: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law: being made a curse for us."

8. The price paid by Christ, in order to our redemption, was no less than his undergoing that curse of the law which was due to us: whence it followeth, that Christ's sufferings by way of satisfaction, were not only in his body, but also in his soul. He did not only wrestle with the fear of death, Heb. v. 7, but was also deprived of that joy and comfort, or the sense and feeling of God's favour and help, which he formerly enjoyed; and had his own sad conflicts and agonies arising in his soul hereupon, Matt. xxvii. 46, which though in us they would necessarily produce sin, yet in Christ they did not, Heb. iv. 15; because of his most pure nature, Heb. vii. 26; for "he was made the curse of the law for us." Now the curse of the law did reach to the terrors of the soul, as well as to the pains of the body.

9. Though Jesus Christ, as considered in his own person, was altogether holy and innocent, Isa. liii. 9, and always, even when he was made a curse, most beloved of the Father, Matt. iii. 17, yet being considered as our surety, Heb. vii. 22, and sustaining our person, he was the object of sin-pursuing justice, and no more spared than if we ourselves who sinned had been in his place: for the text saith, he was not only accursed, "but made a curse," in the abstract, to show how greatly he was accursed in death; neither was this execration only in respect of man, who indeed did judge him execrable, Isa. liii. 3, 4; but also in respect of God, as appeareth by the testimony alleged out of Deut. xxi. 23; for though the apostle, intending the sense only, and not the words, omitteth the mentioning of God; yet in the place cited we have it thus, "He that is hanged is accursed of God."

10. The malefactor among the Jews who was adjudged to end his life by hanging on a tree, was pronounced by God to be a curse, or accursed; not as if every one who died that death even notwithstanding of their repentance, had been rejected of God and condemned, Luke xxiii. 39—43; but partly because that was a most odious and infamous death in itself, as being inflicted only for atrocious and heinous crimes; and partly because it was fore-ordained of God that Christ our surety should end his life by that kind of death, in order to our redemption and delivery from the law's deserved curse; for which cause, mainly, God was pleased to pronounce that kind

of death accursed above any other, as appeareth from the apostle's alleging this scripture to clear that Christ was made a curse for us; "It is written," saith he, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

From ver. 14, learn, 1, so wonderful is God in working, especially in that great work of our redemption, that he bringeth about one contrary by another; he giveth life by death, and the blessing by the curse; and frequently in his way of working, our choicest mercies do come through greatest miseries: for "Christ was made a curse, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles."

2. The blessing promised to Abraham, and to the nations in Abraham, or rather in Christ, Abraham's seed, Gen. xxii. 18, was not of temporal things only, as of corn and wine, of a fat and rich soil: these were only the shell, but the kernel of that promise were blessings of another sort, even spiritual, such as grace here, and glory hereafter; which appeareth from this, that before this blessing could be conveyed to Abraham's believing seed, a price of infinite value behoved to be paid for it, a price too precious to purchase any temporal blessing by; for, "even Christ was made a curse, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles."

3. The spiritual blessing of grace here and glory hereafter, promised to, and in Abraham, as it was purchased by Christ at a dear rate, so it resideth and is extant in him, who is as it were the storehouse, wherein the blessing is laid up, Col. ii. 3, and the dispenser of it unto Abraham's seed, Acts v. 31, in whom believers are truly blessed, Gen. xxii. 18, and from whose fulness we do all receive, and grace for grace, John i. 16; for saith the text, "That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;" or, as it is in the original, *in* Jesus Christ: so that this blessing is still in him, as the fountain and dispenser of it.

4. Though Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8, in so far as remission of sins and life eternal were bestowed upon believers under the Old Testament, through the merit of his death, even before he actually died, Rom. iii. 25, it being sufficient, in order to these effects, that it was transacted between the Father and the Son, that he should die, Isa. liii. 10, and that it was certainly known by God that he would die, Acts xv. 18; yet there were some effects of his death, and those of great advantage to the church both of Jews and Gentiles, which were kept in store, and in God's wise dispensation not to be actually bestowed, until the time of his death; as first in relation to the Gentiles, the real making over of Abraham's blessing unto them, whereby they were made one actual seed unto Abraham with the believing Jews, was to follow upon Christ's death, God having so provided, and not to go before it; for Christ was first made a curse, by being hanged upon a tree, before "the blessing of Abraham did come upon the Gentiles." Secondly, in relation to both Jew and Gentile, the covenant promise made to Abraham and his seed, Gen. xvii. 7, which before Christ's death was veiled over with many carnal ceremonies, and lay hid

under the many reiterated promises of temporal blessings and an earthly Canaan, Gen. xv. 7, &c. was, after Christ's death, to be made more clear, the veil of ceremonies and earthly blessings to be removed, and the promised blessings of righteousness and life everlasting to be held forth in their spiritual beauty and lustre: for upon Christ's being made a curse, he saith, "We," to wit, not only the Gentiles, but the Jews also, of whom Paul was one, "do receive the promise of the Spirit," that is, after the manner of speaking used by the Hebrews, the spiritual promise, in opposition to those external rites and shadows under which it did formerly lurk.

5. Though by the grace of saving faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatever he knoweth to be revealed in the word, Acts xxiv. 14, and is in some measure (especially when faith is lively) affected, and doth practise according to what each truth calleth for, yielding obedience to the commands, Rom. xvi. 26, trembling at threatenings, Isa. lxvi. 2, and embracing the promises of God for this life, Psa. xxiii. 1, and that which is to come, Heb. xi. 13; yet the principal acts of faith, as it is saving and justifying, are the accepting and receiving of the promise, and of Christ's satisfaction to the Father's justice, held forth in the promise: for Paul speaking of faith's part in justification, setteth forth the exercise of it thus, "That we might receive the promise by faith."

6. Faith doth justify and make us blessed, not for any worth in itself, as if the work and merit of faith were reckoned to us for righteousness, but because it is the instrument, and, as it were, the hand of the soul, whereby we receive the promise, and Christ in the promise, whose satisfaction alone is our only righteousness before God, Rom. v. 19; for that Paul is to be understood thus all along this dispute, appeareth from these two verses, wherein he ascribeth our delivery from the curse, and partaking of Abraham's blessing, to Christ's merit, or to his being made a curse for us, giving unto faith only the receiving and embracing of that satisfaction, as it is offered in the promise; "That we might receive the promise through faith," saith he.

VER. 15. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17. And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18. For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

The apostle, having confirmed the truth of his doctrine by several arguments, doth in the second part of the chapter, answer some objections, and jointly herewith refuteth the other error, maintained by his adversaries, about the necessity of observing the ceremonial law; showing, that however the law, or the legal way of dispensing the covenant of grace prescribed unto Moses upon mount Sinai, was for good use, so long as by God's appointment it was to stand in force; yet, Christ being now come in the flesh, the date prefixed for its continuance was now expired, and so the Christian church of Jews and Gentiles wholly freed from the observation of it.

The first objection, as may be gathered by his answer, was to this purpose, that granting what the apostle had said concerning justification by faith in the promise, and not by works, did hold true, before the law was given by Moses; yet afterwards that way of justification seemeth to have been altered, and justification by works established according to the tenor of the law given by God on mount Sinai, seeing that latter acts and constitutions do not only stand in force, but also abrogate the former, in so far at least, as they are inconsistent with the latter.

The apostle answereth by a comparison, which he sheweth is taken from human affairs; and first, setteth down the similitude to this purpose, that a covenant or paction made among men for preserving mutual peace and friendship, being once confirmed by oath, and other usual solemnities, cannot without imputation of levity or injustice be disannulled and quite broken, neither can any condition destructive to the former, be added to it, ver. 15. And, secondly, that he may apply this similitude with greater evidence and force, he first sheweth the nature of that covenant, made by God with Abraham, did consist in promises, wherein the blessing promised is given freely, and not for the merit and worth of our obedience and works, (as the word rendered "promise" doth signify,) and next he sheweth, that all Abraham's seed, not only those who lived before the giving of the law, but those also who lived after; and not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles, were comprehended in the covenant, and to partake of the promised blessing, according to the tenor of it; which he proveth from the formal words of the covenant tender, which express all those who were to partake of the covenanted blessing, by the name of Abraham and of his seed, in the singular number, to show, that it is under one and the same consideration, that they all are his seed, and do partake of his promised blessing; otherwise, if it had been God's purpose to convey the heavenly inheritance unto some upon their faith in the promise, and unto others for the merit of their works, then the promise should have been made unto his seeds in the plural number, as pointing at the different grounds of this their spiritual relation unto Abraham, and not unto his seed in the singular; which seed of Abraham, is here called Christ, to wit, Christ mystical, which comprehendeth Christ the head, and all believers, whether before the law or after, whether Jew or Gentile, as the members of that body whereof Christ is the head; all of which are designed by

the name of Christ, as 1 Cor. xii. 12, Col. i. 24; and so here, to show, that not Moses, not the law, not works, but Christ, the promise, and faith in Christ, and the promise, is the bond and tie of this union pleaded for in Abraham's seed, ver. 16. Thirdly, He applieth the similitude taken from the unchangeableness of human covenants, and inferreth, that much less can that covenant which was made with Abraham and his seed be abrogated, or any condition destructive be added to it by the law, which was given four hundred and thirty years after: which consequence is enforced by four considerations, 1. It was a covenant made with Abraham, not by a man like himself, but by God. 2. It was not only made, but long before ratified and confirmed, both by the oath of God, Heb. vi. 14, and other more than ordinary solemnities, Gen. xv. 9, 10, &c. 3. A covenant, not only made and confirmed, but a covenant confirmed in Christ, or, (as the original will bear,) looking toward Christ, as him alone, upon whom the fulfilling of that covenant did depend, Gen. xxii. 18; so that if this covenant had been abrogated, whether by the law or any other thing, there had been no necessity of sending Christ. And 4. Because this covenant, upon God's part, was a free, absolute promise, the performance whereof did not depend upon the worth of the other party, and so their unworthiness could be no pretence for the abrogation of it; this inference from the comparison, is ver. 17. And fourthly, Because some, in following forth the present objection, might have urged, that though the giving of the law did not fully abrogate the way of justification by faith in the promise; yet this much behaved to be granted, that the law and works were to be conjoined, at least, with the promise and faith in the point of justification; therefore the apostle answereth, ver. 18, that even this much cannot be granted; and that because works and faith, law and promise, are inconsistent as to the point of conveying a right to the covenant inheritance, so that if the works of the law have any influence upon our justification, and right to heaven, the free gifted promise made of God to Abraham, and faith in that promise can have none, and thus the confirmed covenant should yet be abrogated; the absurdity whereof he hath already shown, to wit, ver. 17.

From ver. 15, learn, 1. Though the servants of Jesus Christ will be necessitated sometimes to use some more than ordinary sharpness of speech in their reproofs toward the people of God committed to their charge; yet they are carefully to guard, lest their affections be embittered against them, and would always keep love and affection towards them; yea, and testify their love to them, even when they do most sharply reprove them: for, the apostle, though he upbraided these Galatians with folly, ver. 1, yet here he testifieth, that nevertheless he loved them, while he calleth them brethren; "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men."

2. It is not only lawful, but also exceedingly conducing for the edification of hearers, that ministers make use of similitudes and examples, taken from things natural, 1 Cor. xv. 38, &c., artificial, James iii. 7, or from common custom

among men, for clearing or confirming of spiritual truths to the understanding, and for enforcing the practice of some spiritual duty upon the will and affections, 1 Cor. ix. 24; for similitudes from things earthly, as being more notorious [notorious] unto us, do conduce much, not only to illustrate things spiritual, but also to bring them frequently to our remembrance afterwards, especially when those earthly things, from which the similitude is taken, do occur in our daily employments: hence, the apostle professeth he would "speak after the manner of men," that is, he would make use of a similitude taken from the custom of men, in their civil affairs, for clearing of the truth in hand.

3. As it is lawful for men, whether particular persons or nations, to enter a covenant or paction for keeping of mutual peace and friendship, and to confirm their covenant so made by subscription, oath, 1 Sam. xx. 16, 17, and other lawful and accustomed solemnities, Gen. xxxi. 51, &c., that hereby it may be the more esteemed of as sacred and inviolable; so it is a mark of extreme inconstancy, and carrieth with it the guilt of high perfidy, for those who have once entered such a covenant, to disannul, alter, or add to it at their pleasure, or to stand to it no longer than it maketh for their own advantage: for, saith he, "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto:" no man, to wit, even the men themselves who made the paction; else the similitude would not quadrate to the truth, for illustration whereof it is made use of, to wit, that even God himself that made the covenant with Abraham and his seed, could have no such purpose in giving the law, as to alter and abrogate that covenant, as is clear from ver. 17.

From ver. 16, learn, 1. The covenant of grace made with Abraham and his spiritual seed is a covenant of promise, wherein the thing promised is freely bestowed, and not from the merit or worth of our obedience and works; and herein the promises of this covenant do differ from the promises of the law or covenant of works; for, by the promises, which signify a free promise, is meant the covenant of grace; "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made:" the word signifieth a free promise.

2. This covenant of grace is also a covenant of promises, as containing many promises; for, although it sometimes have the name of a promise, in the singular number, as ver. 17, from that comprehensive and chief promise, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," Gen. xvii. 7, yet it containeth a numerous number of other promises, which are as so many rivulets and streams, flowing from that fountain-promise presently mentioned, even the promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8; for, saith he, "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made."

3. This covenant of grace, or promise, was entered by God with Abraham, as accepting the tender of it, not only for himself, but for his seed, whereby all his natural issue, excepting those only who were expressly excepted by God, (to wit, all the posterity of Ishmael and Esau,

who continued and waxed worse in the apostasy of their forefathers from Abraham's God, Rom. ix. 7, 13.) were comprehended within the covenant, by virtue whereof, though none did attain salvation, but those only who did come up to the conditions of the covenant, whereupon salvation was tendered, to wit, faith, Habak. ii. 4, and repentance, Isa. lv. 7, yet all of them did enjoy the privilege of ordinances, Gen. xvii. 10, and had salvation offered unto them, John iv. 22, not absolutely, but upon God's terms revealed in his word, to wit, if only they would believe and repent: hence, saith the apostle, "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made."

4. As the Christian church of the Gentiles is Abraham's spiritual seed, as well as the church of the Jews, and was looked upon as his seed in that covenant-promise made to Abraham and his seed, Gen. xvii. 5, compared with Rom. iv. 16, 17; so it is under one and the same consideration that both Jew and Gentile, and all who reckon spiritual kindred to Abraham, are his seed, to wit, as they follow the steps of his faith, and at least do profess that doctrine of free justification by faith wherein Abraham walked, Rom. iv. 12, (see the distinction of the seeds, or children, ver. 7, Doct. 8 :) for, seeing the promises spoken of in the text were made to his seed, it seemeth they cannot be that promise, which aimed principally at Christ, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed," Gen. xxii. 18; but the promises made to his seed, the church, and chiefly that promise, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed," Gen. xvii. 7, besides the mentioning of seed in the singular number, were not an argument of any weight, to prove that Christ personal was only meant in the promise, seeing "seed" is a word collective, and may comprehend a number under it, even in the singular number, as the words "flock," "army," and such like; so it seemeth most probable, that by the seed here is meant Christ mystical, or Christ with his body the church, made up both of Jew and Gentile, who reckon spiritual kindred unto Abraham, upon one and the same account; and therefore are designed in the promise by "seed," and not "seeds;" "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed."

5. So strict and near is that union which is betwixt Christ and the church, that not only is he the church's head, Eph. i. 22, but also as the church is his body and fulness, Eph. i. 23; so Christ is mystically and virtually the fulness of the church, in so far as it is he dwelling and working in them by the efficacy of his Spirit, who separateth them from the world, maketh them one mystical body among themselves, and one with himself, and worketh all their works in them, even those which belong to him, not only as the head, but, which also belong to them, as members of the body, 1 Cor. xii. 11, 12, for, hence is it, that the whole believing seed of Abraham is here called Christ, he being the bond of their union, John xvii. 21, the fountain of their life and motion, John iv. 14, and the active immediate principle from which all their spiritual actions do flow, John xv. 5, "And to thy seed, which is Christ," saith he.

From ver. 17, learn, 1. That though God might

have dealt with man by way of sovereignty, as an absolute monarch, enjoining to man his duty, without giving him any ground to hope for a reward of his service; yet he hath been graciously pleased to wave such right, and to deal with him by way of covenant, or paction and agreement, upon just and equal terms, prescribed by God himself, in which God promiseth true happiness to man, and man engageth himself by promise for performance of what God requireth: for, as these are the terms in general upon which God did ever enter any covenant with man; so the apostle supposeth, that God's dealing with man is by way of a covenant, while he saith, "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God."

2. So merciful is God, that after the covenant of works, made with man before the fall, was broken by Adam, Gen. iii. 6, and made useless unto all his posterity, as to the obtaining of heaven and happiness by it, ver. 10, he was graciously pleased to enter a covenant of grace with fallen man, to deliver him from the estate of sin and misery, and to bring him into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer, Rom. iii. 21, 22. This is that covenant here spoken of: "The covenant that was before confirmed of God in Christ."

3. Though the covenant, or paction, entered by God with the church, before Christ came in the flesh, did differ in the way of administration, and in some considerable circumstances, from that covenant which God had entered with his people in the days of the gospel, upon which account they are distinguished by the names of "old" and "new," Heb. viii. 13, "first" and "second" covenant, Heb. viii. 7, yet both these covenants are one and the same in substance, and do fully agree in all the essential parts: for, the apostle's intent is, to prove that we are justified under the New Testament, by that covenant, which "was confirmed before of God in Christ unto Abraham, four hundred and thirty years before the law."

4. So prone is fallen man to misbelieve the truth and reality of God's offer in the covenant of grace, John iv. 48, and especially to question the making out of that offer to himself in particular, Psa. lxxxviii. 4, 5, &c.; and so willing is God to have all doubts of that kind fully satisfied, Heb. vi. 17, that, though his gracious word of promise be of itself worthy of all acceptance and trust, 1 Tim. i. 15, yet he hath been graciously pleased to add all those confirmations unto his covenant-grant, which are used among men, who being most suspected would most gladly be trusted. He hath committed it to writing, John xx. 31, confirmed it by witnesses, Heb. ii. 3, with miracles, Heb. ii. 4, by oath, Heb. vi. 13, 17, and by seals, Matt. xxvi. 28, and xxviii. 19, compared with Rom. iv. 11, for, saith he, "The covenant that was before confirmed of God."

5. The covenant of grace had a special relation to Jesus Christ, as well under the old administration as under the new; he being that seed of the woman, who was to bruise the head of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15, and in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, Gen. xxii. 18, and the substance of all those ceremonial shadows, (the practice whereof was then enjoined,) Col. ii. 17, and being the thing signified in all their sa-

eraments, 1 Cor. v. 7, 1 Cor. x. 4, and God's design in giving the law, being to drive men to Christ for righteousness, Rom. x. 4, for, saith he, "The covenant was confirmed before of God in Christ," or, "tending towards Christ," as the original will bear.

6. The knowledge of Scripture chronology, whereby we know not only those things which are mentioned in Scripture story, but also the time when every thing did fall out, so far as may be gathered by the Scripture itself chiefly, is necessary and profitable for the better understanding of God's mind in divers parts of his word: for here, the apostle observeth the time when the law was given, and layeth the great stress of his argument upon it, whereby he proveth, that the law could not disannul the covenant of free grace, made with Abraham, even because "the law was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant was confirmed of God in Christ:" the beginning of which space of years is to be reckoned from the first solemn sanction and confirmation of the covenant by God to Abraham, Gen. xv. 8, &c., and the close of it was at the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, which was the first year of Israel's coming out of Egypt, Exod. xix. 1.

7. God's intent in giving the law, and urging exact obedience to it under hazard of the curse, neither was, nor is, that hereby people should be taken off from seeking righteousness and life eternal only by faith in the promise, or that they should set about the practice of duties commanded by the law, as that which was to make them righteous before God: the law was given for other ends, as the apostle doth after declare; but not for this; for he sheweth here, that God's design in giving the law could not "disannul the covenant made with Abraham," or, "make the promise of none effect."

From ver. 18, learn, 1. So subtle is the spirit of error, that it will seem to cede somewhat to truth, as hereby intending to prejudice the truth more than if it had ceded nothing; for the opponents of justification by faith, did sometimes give faith some place in justification, and pleaded only for a joint influence of works and faith, of the law and the promise, which conceit of theirs the apostle doth here refute; "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise."

2. The state of grace and favour with God here, and of glory hereafter, is the inheritance, portion, and heirship of the Lord's people, there being no temporal worldly inheritance which can sufficiently furnish the heart with satisfaction, Psa. iv. 6, 7, of which spiritual and heavenly inheritance the land of Canaan was a type; for the apostle, speaking of justification, and all the spiritual blessings which flow from it, calleth them the inheritance by way of excellency; "If the inheritance be of the law."

3. There are only two ways of attaining a right to this inheritance; one, by the law, or by works done in obedience to the law, chap. ii. 16, which was the tenor of the covenant of works; the other is by the promise, or by faith in Jesus Christ offered in the promise, chap. ii. 16, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. The apostle speaketh of these two ways here,

"If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise."

4. There can be no mixture of these two, so that a right to heaven should be obtained, partly by the merit of works, and partly by faith in the promise; the one of those removeth the other: for, saith he, "If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise."

5. The only way of attaining right to this inheritance now, since the fall, is by God's free gift, without the merit of works; for "God did give it to Abraham," the father of all justified persons; the word signifieth he gave it freely, without respect had to Abraham's works.

6. The tender and offer of this gracious gift, is made in the promises of the gospel, which, being laid hold upon by faith, do entitle the believer to the tendered inheritance, 1 John v. 10—12; for, saith he, "God gave it by promise."

VER. 19. Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It

was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Here is a second objection, to wit, if the law, or works done in obedience to the law, do not justify, then it seemeth the law hath been given by Moses upon Mount Sinai, in vain and to no purpose; which objection is expressed in a question, the meaning whereof is, for what end was the law at that time delivered, containing such a number of precepts, enjoining so many moral, judicial, and ceremonial duties, promising life unto the obedient? Lev. xviii. 5, and threatening God's wrath and curse to the disobedient, Deut. xxvii. 26; wherefore was all this, if the inheritance of life eternal come not by the works of the law? The apostle answereth, showing, first, one main end for which the law was added to the promise, and so much inculcated at that time, to wit, for the discovery, Rom. iii. 20, and restraint of sin, Numb. xv. 39, and for the more thorough conviction of the sinner's lost and cursed estate in himself because of sin, Rom. iii. 19. He sheweth, secondly, that this servile and childish discipline, as having more of terror than love in it, was to continue only during the infant state of the church, until at Christ's coming in the flesh, that spiritual seed of Abraham to whom the promise was made, should appear complete in its principal parts, and both Jew and Gentile be gathered into one body. But, thirdly, lest he should seem to debase the law too much, he commendeth it, partly from the ministry of the angels used therein, Heb. ii. 2, Acts vii. 38, and partly from the mediation of Moses, who did communicate the word of the law from God to the people, Deut. v. 5; which latter, as it serveth to commend the law, so also to enforce the apostle's main scope, to wit, that the precepts and threatenings of the law were only added because of transgressions, and that God intended no such thing, as thereby to hold forth to the

people of Israel a covenant of life, upon condition of obedience to what the law required, seeing there was a necessity to make use of Moses, as a mids-man, to speak between God and the people; which did argue them to be conscious to themselves of their own guilt, and therefore durst not approach unto God, Exod. xx. 18, 19. And therefore, fourthly, the apostle proveth this consequence, ver. 20, from the office of a mediator, which is not used but only betwixt disagreeing parties, whence he leaveth them to gather that it had been altogether in vain for God to have entered a covenant for life, upon condition of works, with such a guilty sinful people as could not fulfil the condition required in that covenant, and consequently could reap no advantage by it, especially seeing, as he expressly affirmeth, God is always one, consonant to himself, and doth not dispense with one jot of that perfect, universal, and constant obedience, required as the condition of obtaining salvation according to the tenor of the covenant of works, Deut. xxvii. 26.

From ver. 19, learn, 1. So bent are men upon the abuse of things, in themselves good, (whether divine ordinances, or any other gift bestowed by God upon them,) that they cannot difference betwixt the right use and abuse of these things, and are apt to conclude, if they may not abuse them to gratify some one lust or other, that they can serve for no use to them, and so are given by God in vain. Thus the false apostles concluded, that if the law was not given to justify, it was wholly useless; "Wherefore then serveth the law?" say they.

2. As the moral law, Gen. xiii. 8, together with the powerful working of God's Spirit in the regenerate, Gen. xxxix. 9, and God's restraining grace, Gen. xx. 6, the discipline of the church, Gen. ix. 25, and the power of magistracy which then was, Gen. ix. 6, did serve to discover and restrain transgressions, and to convince sinners of their lost estate because of sin, before the law given upon Mount Sinai, and do yet serve for the same uses and ends to the Christian church; so the Lord was pleased, in renewing the covenant of grace with his people upon Mount Sinai, to cast it in such a legal mould, as that hereby he might bring down the pride of that stiff-necked people, and the more effectually convince them of sin, and of God's curse due to them for sin; which legal dispensation of the covenant did stand in this, mainly, that the duties and curses of the law were held forth frequently, fully, and clearly, Exod. xx. 2, &c., Deut. v. 6, &c., xxvii. 15, &c., and xxviii. 15, &c., and the promises chiefly of eternal life, yea, and of Christ and remission of sins, but sparingly, and for the most part very obscurely under the veil of earthly shadows and ceremonies, 2 Cor. iii. 13, and under some dark prophecies, Isa. liii. 7, 8, compared with Acts viii. 34. And besides all this, there was a yoke of other duties, over and above the duties of the moral law, laid upon them, to wit, the duties of the law both judicial and ceremonial, Exod. xxiv. Lev. i., and obedience to them most strictly urged, and that under hazard of the same so much reiterated curse, Deut. xxvii. 26; for, saith he, "The law was added," to wit, on Mount Sinai, and added to the cove-

nant promise made to Abraham, "because of transgressions." Now he cannot mean the moral law, as to the substance of it, for that did perpetually sound in the church ever since it was a church, even before Moses, Gen. xviii. 19, and so it was not then added; neither doth he mean, by the law, that whole doctrine which was delivered from God upon Mount Sinai; for that doctrine did contain in it a covenant of grace, the very promise of salvation and pardon of sin through the Messiah to come, Luke xxiv. 27, which was formerly made to Abraham, only it was clothed with a more legal dispensation; and so the law taken so generally, cannot be said to have been added. It remaineth therefore that by the law, which was then added to the promise because of transgressions, must be meant that legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, set down in the body of this second doctrine, whereby it did at the first view, and without very accurate inspection, appear to be a covenant of works, although it was really a covenant of grace.

3. This legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, was not to continue always in the church, but until the partition wall being broken down at Christ's death, Eph. ii. 14—16, the Gentiles should be called unto the fellowship of the church, and, together with the Jews, make up one complete seed unto Abraham: then was the yoke of judicial, Gen. xlix. 10, and ceremonial duties, Acts xv. 10, to be taken off; the veil of shadows and dark prophecies, whereby Christ and free grace were hid and covered, to be laid aside, 2 Cor. iii. 11, 12; and though the duties of the moral law are yet to be pressed, Col. iii. 18, &c. and the curse of the law to be denounced against all who are in their natural estate, Col. iii. 6, yet covenanted grace and furniture for duty, John i. 17, and Christ's becoming a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law, are more clearly held forth now in the days of the gospel, ver. 13, than they were formerly: for, saith he, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."

4. The gospel is so to be commended and preferred unto the law, as nothing of that honour and respect which is due unto the law, be taken from it; and the doctrine of the law and gospel are to be so bounded, as neither may encroach upon the other: for lest Paul in setting limits between the law and the gospel, should seem to vilify the law, he commendeth it from this, "That it was ordained by angels in the hand," or, by the ministry and service "of a mediator."

5. Though Moses was the mediator here spoken of, Deut. v. 5, yet it followeth not, that angels and saints are mediators in heaven; for Moses was present with the people, and ordained a mediator by God for this one act, which was to relate and report the law from God to the people: now it can carry no show of reason, from this to conclude, that therefore the saints, who are absent in heaven, and so are ignorant of us, Isa. lxiii. 16, or, that either saint or angel should be constituted mediators to report our prayers and the secrets of our hearts unto God, especially seeing no scripture doth prove that any such

office is put upon them by God; "It was ordained in the hand of a mediator."

From ver. 20, learn, 1. Conscience of guilt presenteth God as terrible, and taketh away all confidence from the guilty sinner to approach in a friendly manner by himself to a provoked God: for no intercourse can be between God and his people, when they are not one, but differ by reason of his people's sin; "A mediator is not of one," saith he, there was a disagreement through sin, which called for a mediator.

2. The covenant of works, entered with Adam in the state of innocency, was immediate, no mediator intervening to make them one, wherein it differeth from the covenant of grace, Heb. viii. 6, for God and man, before the fall, were one, and no disagreement betwixt them because of sin; and so there was no use for a mediator in the covenant that was then made: for "A mediator is not a mediator of one," saith Paul.

3. No man can attain to heaven, or reap any advantage by a covenant of works, except he were perfectly holy, and as free of sin as Adam was before his fall: for the apostle, proving that God made no covenant of works with them upon mount Sinai, and that they could have reaped no benefit by such a covenant, thinketh it sufficient to evince, that they were then a sinful people; which he evinceth from this, that they stood in need of a mids-man betwixt God and them; "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one," saith he.

4. The Lord in all his dispensations is always one, and like to himself, without any shadow of turning, James i. 17; his work and way of dealing may, and hath changed, even his way of dispensing the covenant of grace to his church, Heb. viii. 8, 9; but he remaineth unchangeable, there being no change of that kind which he hath not fore-ordained by his unchangeable decree, Eph. i. 11; thus he saith, "God is one," that is, with relation to the present scope; if any plead a right to heaven, for the merit of their works, God will abate nothing of what he himself did once prescribe and require of man in the covenant of works.

VER. 21. *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

Followeth the third objection, to wit, if the law be given to discover and condemn for transgressions, as is affirmed ver. 19, then it is contrary to the covenant promise, which doth cover and pardon sin, quicken and justify the sinner. He answereth, 1, by denying and rejecting the consequence as absurd and abominable. 2. By retorting the argument against the adversaries themselves: for if the law, or, if our works done in obedience to the law, could procure eternal life, as they affirmed, then our

righteousness before God, should consist in works, or, the law should justify; leaving them to gather, that this would suppose the former covenant by promise to be abolished and quite destroyed by the law; so that, according to their doctrine, the law was both contrary unto, and destructive of the promise, ver. 21.

3. He answereth directly, showing the law, called here the Scripture, (or, "that Scripture," as it is in the original) while it convinceth, accuseth and condemneth all mankind for sin, and so concludeth and incloseth all men under sin, and the curse due to sin, as the judge doth the malefactor in prison, is not contrary, but subordinate and subservient to the promise, in so far, as that hereby the guilty sinner, (being made to lay aside all confidence in his own righteousness, Rom. vii. 9,) doth flee by faith in Jesus Christ for a refuge to the promise; and so the thing promised, to wit, righteousness and salvation, becometh the sinner's, and is conveyed unto him, to wit, upon his believing.

From ver. 21, learn, 1. It is the way of heretics to set scripture against scripture, and to make one scripture seem to contradict another, except their erroneous sense and interpretation of Scripture be received, as intended by the Spirit of God: for these false apostles did affirm, if so the law did not give life, but did only discover and accuse for transgressions, then God's mind in the law should have been contrary to his mind revealed in the promise: hence Paul propoundeth this question unto himself to answer, "Is the law then against the promises of God?"

2. However heretics may labour to fasten such absurdities upon truth, as if it were contrary to some other parts of God's mind revealed in Scripture, yet their bold allegations will be found always false, and truth to be ever most consonant, and never contrary to itself: for so the apostle sheweth of the truth in hand; "God forbid," saith he.

3. There are some sins (chiefly those that do most directly reflect upon any divine perfection, or attribute of God) the very first notions whereof ought to be entertained with abhorrence and detestation; and this either when a temptation to commit such sins is presented to us, Job ii. 9, 10; or, when the guilt of them, as already committed, is intended to be unjustly fastened upon us: for when Paul's adversaries would have charged him with making the law to contradict the promise, and so God to be changeable, and not consonant to himself; he rejecteth this blasphemous charge with a "God forbid;" an expression frequently used by the apostle to set out his high indignation against somewhat wherewith his person or doctrine was charged, Rom. iii. 4—6; vi. 2.

4. As these absurdities, wherewith the adversaries of truth are ready to brand the truth unjustly, do oftentimes by direct and just consequence most directly follow upon that error, which they themselves maintain: so, in order to the refutation of error, (besides the alleging of such reasons and Scripture truths as do directly overthrow the error,) it is lawful and also convenient, to present those absurdities which do natively flow from it; that in these the absurdity

of the error itself may be seen, seeing no absurd and false position can be drawn by just consequence from that which is a truth: thus the apostle, refuting that error of justification by works, doth charge it with that absurdity which his adversaries did labour to fasten upon the contrary truth, even of being contrary to the covenant promise, while he saith, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," and so the promise had been abolished and made useless.

5. No man can attain to life eternal, being destitute of some righteousness, whereby he may be made righteous: for, according to the apostle, "If the law could give life," to wit, eternal life, it behoved also to have given righteousness; "Verily righteousness should have been by the law."

6. So exact and full is that righteousness that is required in order to life, see ver. 10, and so far short do all mankind come of that righteousness in themselves, Rom. iii. 23, that no works of our own, done in obedience to the law, can amount to that righteousness: for he speaketh of it as a great absurdity once to imagine, "that righteousness should have been by the law."

7. Whoever maintain a life procuring righteousness by works, they do in effect abolish and destroy that free grace held forth in the promise, in so far as they make the promise useless and in vain, ascribing that to works, which is the proper effect of grace in the promise, and which cannot be effectuated by our imperfect works; for when, according to the strain of the argument, it would have been said, verily the law should have been contrary to the promise, in its place, and as the equivalent of that, he saith, "Verily righteousness should have been by the law."

From ver. 22, learn, 1. Though all men by nature be under sin, Rom. iii. 10, and the deserved curse of the law because of sin, Eph. ii. 3, yet, it is a matter of no small difficulty to convince any man of, or to affect his heart sensibly either with the one or the other: for the work of the law, its accusing, convincing, or condemning the sinner for sin, is compared to the work of a judge detaining a malefactor in prison, which is not effectuated but with a kind of force and violence: "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin;" the word carrieth a metaphor, taken from a judge his imprisoning of malefactors.

2. The Scripture, especially the law of God in its strict commands, large accusations, and most severe threatenings, doth serve abundantly to convince all mankind to be heinous sinners, and under the drop of God's terrible curse for sin, and this so forcibly, that there is not the least wicket patent for him, whereby he may either deny his sin, or escape deserved wrath, by any thing which can be performed by himself: for the Scripture, or, that Scripture, to wit, the law especially, "hath concluded all under sin," as in a most strict prison or dungeon; for so the word beareth: and although by the law here, be mainly and firstly meant that legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, which stood in force during the time of the Old Testament, (see ver. 19, Doct. 2,) that thereby this conviction might be

the more effectually brought about; yet the pressing of the duties of the moral law, and inculcating the curse thereof upon those who are in an unrenewed estate, do serve to conclude all under sin yet, Luke xiii. 3.

3. The law of God doth serve to convince all men, not only that they are sinners, but also that all their actions, counsels, endeavours, and whatsoever proceedeth from any of their unrenewed faculties, Gen. vi. 5, are altogether sinful, and most justly deserving God's wrath and curse: for he saith, "The Scripture hath concluded all" (not only all men, but all things, to wit, all things proceeding from men) "under sin."

4. So ignorant are men of God's righteousness revealed in the gospel, and so averse are they from closing with it, when it is made in some measure known, John v. 40; so bent are they to establish their own righteousness according to the law, Rom. x. 3; that, until the law of God convince them of their altogether sinful and cursed estate by nature, yea, and that they can do nothing but sin, they will never be induced to quit all confidence in their own righteousness, and flee by faith, in Jesus Christ, for obtaining of righteousness and salvation, according to the tenor of the gospel and promise: for God did not only under the Old Testament, but also doth under the New, (Acts ii. 37,) use that piece of divine artifice, to conclude all under sin, that the promise, (or, thing promised,) by faith in Jesus Christ may be given: the promise is not given, because none will take it, until that concluding under sin precede.

5. The Lord's design in pressing the duties, and thundering out the curses of the law for disobedience, is merely this, that sinners being hereby convinced of their cursed estate in themselves, and made desperate of obtaining heaven and salvation by their own works, may be in a manner prepared, and, as it were, necessitated, by faith to embrace that free gift of salvation held forth through Christ in the promise: for, saith he, "The Scripture hath concluded all men under sin;" not of purpose to condemn us, but "that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given unto them who believe."

6. The heavenly inheritance, and all the other blessings promised in the covenant of grace, do not belong promiscuously unto all whom the law concludeth under sin, but only to those who by faith do embrace and close with them, as they are offered in the promise: for, saith he, "That the promise," (or, the thing promised) "might be given to them that believe."

7. That faith which entitleth to the promise, is not a general faith in God as creator, such as the faith of Turks; but it is faith in Jesus the son of Mary, Matt. i. 25, who is that Christ or Messiah, who, being promised under the Old Testament, (Isa. vii. 14,) is now come under the New: it is this faith relying on Christ, who by his merit hath purchased the thing promised, Isa. liii. 5, which giveth a right unto the promise: for to specify what believers they are to whom the promise is given, he addeth, "by the faith of Jesus Christ."

VER. 23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to *bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

In these words the apostle answereth a fifth objection, and doth more directly handle that point concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law; yea, of the whole Mosaiical dispensation, now, under the days of the gospel: the adversaries might have objected, seeing the law, or that legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, was so useful unto the ancient church, and so subservient to the promise, as is affirmed, ver. 22. Then why did Paul cry down the use of it, especially the practice of the ceremonial law now? The apostle answereth by distinguishing times, and sheweth, that before faith came, whereby he meaneth not the grace of saving faith, (for that was always in the church, Heb. xi. 4, &c.,) but either Christ, called faith, because he is the object of faith, (in which sense he is called our hope, 1 Tim. i. 1,) or, the full manifestation of the doctrine of faith, which was about the time of Christ's death and ascension: he granteth, I say, that before that time, the use of the law was first necessary to the Jews, because they were by the law, as by a military guard, kept, to wit chiefly, from being mixed with other nations, whether in religion or policy, Eph. ii. 14. Secondly, it was saving to them, in so far as it did shut up, conclude, and inclose them, as it were in a prison, (for it is the same word, and that same purpose more fully expressed, which is ver. 22,) under sin and the curse due to sin, that hereby they might be in a manner prepared, and, as it were, necessitated to embrace the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, which was then but darkly, Matt. xi. 11, and afterwards more clearly revealed, the full revelation whereof, they were by this means, kept more intent upon, ver. 23, which latter use of the law, he illustrateth and concludeth, by showing the law, as a pedagogue or schoolmaster, did with much rigour and servitude, govern and rule the church then in her infancy and childhood, and thereby did lead the elect unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith. The apostle having thus showed (ver. 23, 24,) that the law, that is, the legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, was for good use to the ancient church, denieth that therefore the use of it should be continued now, when the doctrine of faith is clearly manifested; yea, by the contrary, he sheweth it was then to be abrogated, and the Christian church freed from the observation of it, because it exercised only the office of a schoolmaster over children, and so can have no authority over the church, and especially believers now, ver. 25, which he proveth from this: that the Christian church, and all of them, to wit, Jew

and Gentile, were like a son come to age, because of their faith in Christ Jesus already come; and so was to be dealt with no longer as a child under a schoolmaster. Ver. 26.

From ver. 23, learn, 1. Though there was gospel, or the doctrine of salvation by free grace held forth, to be laid hold upon by faith, unto the ancient church, ver. 8; yet it was so obscurely and sparingly propounded then, and so clearly and largely manifested now, that the Scripture speaketh as if that doctrine had not been at all in the church then, but only revealed now in the days of the gospel: for here, he calleth all the time of the Old Testament, the time before faith came, or before the doctrine of free grace, the object of faith came, and that this faith was afterwards to be revealed, to wit, because it was but sparingly revealed then.

2. Besides other differences betwixt the administration of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament, and under the New, this was one, the old administration was extended only to the Jews, Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20, and to some of other nations, who, forgetting their own people, (Psa. xlv. 10,) joined themselves to them; but the new is extended to all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19, for this difference is here hinted at, while the apostle (speaking of those who were under that old dispensation, ver. 23, 24,) speaketh of them in the first person, "We were kept under," &c. "We," that is, the nation of the Jews, whereof Paul was one; but, speaking of those who are under the new dispensation, he mentioneth not only the Jews, under the pronoun of the first person, we, ver. 25; but also the Gentiles, under the pronoun of the second person, ye, ver. 26, "for ye," saith he, to wit, the Galatians of the Gentiles, "are all the children of God."

3. The administration of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament by so many rites, sacrifices, ceremonies, such a system of politic laws, such rigid pressing of moral duties, with the annexed promises of eternal life, and threatenings of God's wrath and curse, (the gospel promise all the while being hid, as it were, behind the curtain,) among other uses, did serve for a hedge, or a place of military defence, to keep that ancient people, of whom Christ was to come, distinct and separate from all other nations, as a besieged city is guarded by walls, ditches, and armed soldiers, from the irruption of enemies: for this is aimed at while he saith, "We were kept under the law," to wit, as by a military guard; for so the word signifieth. It is true, they were also kept from going astray, either in religion, or in life and conversation; but that use of the law was mentioned ver. 19.

4. The hard servitude wherewith the ancient church was pressed, and under which she was, as to her outward estate, as it did forcibly constrain the elect among them, to quit their own righteousness, and to betake themselves for righteousness and life unto faith in the promised Messiah, as knowing somewhat from Scripture (Ilag. ii. 6, 7, compared with Heb. xii. 26, 27,) that then the church should be eased of that hard servitude and bondage: for in both these respects, the law did shut them up unto the faith

afterwards to be revealed, making them close with the doctrine of free-grace, for salvation by faith in the meantime, and earnestly to expect the full revelation of it by the Messiah, John iv. 25.

From ver. 24, learn, 1. The church of God, considered as a politic body, and with relation to her different state in several times, hath some resemblance to the age of a man, as having had her infancy under the patriarchs, her childhood under Moses, and her perfect age under the gospel: which different states, and, as it were, several ages of the church, did arise, partly from the church's rudeness and incapacity to comprehend spiritual truths in their native beauty and lustre, which were always the greater, by how much the church was nearer her beginning: and partly from the different measures and degrees, wherein the promise and way of salvation by the Messiah, were made known to the church; the manifestation whereof was first very obscure, Gen. iii. 15; but afterwards always more and more clear, until at last, according to the foregoing prophecies, (Mal. iv. 2,) the sun of righteousness, at Christ's incarnation, death and ascension, did arise with healing under his wings: the apostle pointeth at those several ages of the church, while he representeth the Jewish church as a child under a pedagogue in this verse, and more fully, chap. iv. ver. 3, and the Christian church, as men of perfect age, and so no longer under a schoolmaster, ver. 25, 26.

2. The Lord's visible way of dispensing grace and covenanted blessings by external means, hath not been always one and the same, but diverse according to the temper and complexion of his church in her several states and ages; so that as the church's state was more rude and earthly, or more polished and spiritual, the Lord did train her up under a more rude or spiritual form of worship; thus the church, while in her infancy and childhood, was under a pedagogue, whose charge is to attend children; "The law was our schoolmaster;" but now, being come to grown age, she is no longer under a schoolmaster.

3. The Lord's way of dispensing grace under the Old Testament, as it is set down in the law given by Moses, was very suitable to the childish and infant state of the church, the Lord dealing with them in a way much like to that whereby schoolmasters do train up children at schools: for under this dispensation there were, first, a whip and rod, to make the refractory stand in awe, even the frequent inculcating of God's curse, Deut. xxvii. 15, &c., and comminations of temporal calamities, Deut. xxviii. 16, &c., and also many ceremonial penances, in their many washings and purifications, Lev. xv., through the whole chapter. Secondly, there were allurements also for those who were of better and softer natures, to gain and keep them in obedience, such as did befit the state and condition of that people, even frequently reiterated promises of temporal blessings, Deut. xxviii. 3, &c., and also an earthly inheritance, Isa. i. 19. Thirdly, there were restraints also from the use of things (in their own nature indifferent) put upon them, under sore certifications, Lev. xi.

through the whole; thus to try their obedience, to bow their wills, and so to make them tractable and obedient in these other more weighty things of the law, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. And lastly, though their dignity, as sons, was not altogether kept up from them, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18; yet it was but seldom made mention of; and the promise, the charter of their inheritance, kept up under a dark veil, 2 Cor. iii. 13; and they themselves made to serve under hard servitude and bondage, as if they had not been sons but servants, chap. iv. 3. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster," saith he.

4. God's great design and scope in all this pedagogy of the law, was, that thereby souls might be directed unto Christ, and made to close with him for righteousness, Rom. x. 4. The frequent inculcating of the moral law and promises of life upon their obedience, did convince them how far they were from that exact righteousness which God required; and that therefore they behoved to seek for righteousness somewhere else, which was enforced by the threatenings of the law, showing that otherwise they would perish. The ceremonies, sacrifices, and frequent washings, did also tend to this, even to convince them of, and to keep their eye fixed upon, their own filthiness and deserved damnation, and to make them seek for righteousness, satisfaction to provoked justice, and the expiation of their sin, in that alone sacrifice of the death and blood of Christ, Heb. ix. 9—11; for, saith he, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

5. The godly, under the Old Testament, were justified by faith, laying hold upon Christ for righteousness, even as we are now: for, saith he, "The law did bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

From ver. 25, learn, 1. The proposing unto ourselves to bring about a good, necessary, and spiritual end, is not sufficient to justify our use-making of whatsoever means we may conceive to be or sometimes have been approved of God, as conducive for that end, except those means have a present stamp of divine approbation for the using of them: God's end is to be endeavoured by his own means; for though the bringing of us to Christ for righteousness be as necessary now under the gospel as it was under the law; and though the pedagogy of the law of Moses was an approved mean for bringing about that end under the Old Testament; yet Paul will not grant, that therefore it should now be made use of in order to that end, because under the days of the gospel, the tie of divine authority enjoining the use-making of that schoolmaster is ceased. "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster," saith he; and therefore are not to subject ourselves unto him. 2. Though the curse of the moral law is to be denounced against all impenitent sinners in the Christian church, that hereby they may be constrained to flee unto Christ for righteousness, John iii. 36, and the precepts thereof are to be urged upon the regenerate, as the rule of their obedience, Eph. vi. 1, &c., and though the exact righteousness required in the law doth serve as a glass wherein even the renewed may see their

manifold failings, Rom. vii. 14, &c., and so be necessitated to betake themselves daily to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, Rom. vii. 25, (in which respects the moral law may be called a schoolmaster even to the Christian church, and a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ,) yet the Christian church is fully freed from that legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, which was added to the covenant-promise upon Mount Sinai, which what it was, is explained, ver. 19, Doct. 2, and ver. 24, Doct. 3. "For after that faith is come, we are no more under this schoolmaster," saith he.

From ver. 26, learn, 1. The church of God under the New Testament, as to her outward state, is in a state of sonship or adoption, which noteth her freedom from that rigour and servitude under which the ancient church was through the outward legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, chap. iv. 3, and the truly godly have some peculiar dignity added in relation to the grace of adoption, over and above what believers under the Old Testament had, in so far as the veil of that legal dispensation being removed, the generality at least of believers now have more ready access to the covenant promise, and a clearer insight in and knowledge of all those privileges which belong unto them as the sons of God, Heb. xii. 22—24, for taking what the apostle saith of their being the children of God in both or either of those respects, his intended scope is brought about, which is to show, that the Christian church is not under the pedagogy of that Mosaic dispensation, even "for," or "because ye are all the children of God," saith he. 2. Though faith in the Messiah to come did entitle believers under the Old Testament to the dignity of sons and daughters to the Lord Almighty, yet faith in Jesus Christ already come, doth add some peculiar dignity of sonship upon the Christian church, and especially upon believers in it, even that which is presently mentioned in the preceding doctrine, the Lord having been pleased to make the church's full growth, and utmost perfections, (as to her privileges and outward state and measure of access,) to tryst [meet] with his Son's coming in the flesh, that so his entry to the world might be more stately, as being accompanied with such a measure of royal munificence, Heb. xi. 40, for, saith he, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," to wit, already come.

VER. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The apostle having proved that the Christian church is freed from the Mosaic dispensation, which was added to the promise upon Mount Sinai, seemeth in these verses not only to confirm that which he had presently asserted, of our being the children of God by faith, because we

are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, are one in Christ, but also and mainly, to obviate an objection yet more made use of by the false apostles in behalf of circumcision, which was not added upon Mount Sinai unto the promise, but given to Abraham with the promise, as the initiatory seal of the promise, Gen. xvii. 10; whence, it seems, they argued, that notwithstanding all that which was added upon Mount Sinai was now abrogated, yet circumcision was to be kept in the church, as that without which none could be Abraham's seed, or an heir according to the promise. The apostle's answer cometh in effect to this, that baptism into Christ, that is, which sealeth and signifieth our ingrafting into Christ, Rom. vi. 4, was substituted in the place of circumcision, and sufficient for compassing all those ends for which circumcision was instituted; and that because they who are "baptized into Christ do put on Christ," and so are in a manner incorporate, and make one body with him, as a man is incorporated with his garments, from which the word is borrowed, ver. 26. Which incorporation of the Christian church, and making all the members thereof one in Christ, he sheweth is effectuated without any respect had to any difference of nations, conditions worldly, or distinction of sexes, leaving them to gather, that circumcision (which by virtue of its institution did serve for keeping up a distinction between Jew and Gentile, Exod. xii. 48,) could have no influence upon this business, ver. 28. From all which he concludeth, seeing baptism doth testify and seal up Christ's interest in those who are baptized, as his and their union with Christ, who is the real Head of the blessed race through whom alone Abraham and his seed were to be blessed; that therefore, *ipso facto*, and without any more ado, they were Abraham's seed, and apparent heirs of that heavenly inheritance given unto Abraham by promise, and so that there was no necessity, in order to this end, of joining them to the blessed nation by circumcision, as the ancient proselytes were, and as the false apostles alleged should yet be practised, ver. 29.

From ver. 27, learn, 1. Though circumcision, the initiatory seal and leading sacrament of the covenant under the Old Testament, Exod. xii. 48, be now abolished with the rest of that ancient dispensation; yet seeing the church of God, even under the New Testament, is not wholly spiritual, but in part earthly and carnal, Rom. vii. 14, standing in need to be instructed and confirmed in spiritual truths by things sensible and earthly, John iii. 12, it hath therefore seemed good unto God to enjoin the celebration of some sacraments in the Christian church unto the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, which are in signification more clear, and in use less painful and burthensome; and particularly, he hath substituted baptism in the place of circumcision, which doth serve for all these spiritual uses now, which circumcision did serve for then, to wit, all these uses which were of common concernment to the church at all times, and not peculiar to the dispensation which then was: for the apostle, clearing how circumcision was now abrogated, doth show how baptism doth succeed it in all those necessary uses for which it did serve:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

2. Among other uses for which baptism doth serve, this is the first and chief; to signify and seal up our engrafting into, and union with Christ: there is an external visible union, consisting in external covenanting, and serious profession of Christian truths, either personally or parentally, which is sealed up to all visible professors absolutely; for they are in him externally, John xv. 2. There is a real and saving union signified and sealed up unto all the regenerate absolutely; for they are in him savingly, Rom. viii. 1; and to all the members of the visible church conditionally, if so they come up to the terms which Scripture calleth for, as necessary in order to union with him, to wit, saving faith: for this much the apostle doth import, by saying, "we are baptized into Christ," even that our engrafting into him is signified and sealed by baptism.

3. Baptism doth also signify and seal our putting on of Christ, to wit, by faith; for by faith we make application of Christ unto ourselves, John vi. 40, and Christ so applied serveth for the same use to the soul which garments do serve to the body; he covereth our loathsome nakedness, Rev. iii. 18, and is also for an ornament unto us, Eph. v. 27. He communicateth heat and warmth, even those sweet refreshing influences of his Spirit for life and godliness, Cant. i. 2, and ii. 5, 6. And Christ is thus, and for these ends put on in baptism; partly, because baptism engageth all who are baptized to put him so on, Rom. vi. 4, and partly, because those who are baptized inwardly by the Spirit, as well as outwardly by water, do actually and really put him on, 1 Pet. iii. 21. "As many as are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;" it is a metaphor taken from garments which men put on to cover, adorn, and keep themselves warm.

From ver. 28, learn, 1. Though Christian religion abolish not those civil distinctions, which are between nation and nation, master and servant, 1 Pet. ii. 18, or the dignity of the one sex above the other, 1 Cor. xi. 7—9; yet it layeth no weight upon any of these as to the point of access unto Christ and use-making of him. Whatever nation, rank, or sex a person be of, it is all one in this matter; none are debarred from Christ, nor yet the more accepted by him for any of these things; for having spoken of putting on Christ, he subjoineth, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek," &c.

2. After, and upon Christ's coming in the flesh, the door of free grace hath been much more enlarged beyond what it formerly was; so that the Greek and Gentile have all restraints taken off, and a like ready access with the Jews to Jesus Christ: for the apostle's main scope in this verse, is to show that there is no difference now between Jew or Greek; and by consequence, that circumcision, which was one main part of the partition wall betwixt them, was not any longer to stand in force; and what is spoken of the bond and free, male and female, seemeth to be added for illustration and confirmation of this truth only, except he doth also hint, that those restraints which were upon bondmen, and the

female sex, as to the enjoying of some privileges under the Old Testament, Gen. xvii. 10, Lev. xxi. 10, were now also taken off: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female."

3. There is an union among all those who are baptized, whereby they make up, as it were, but one man, to wit, all visible church members of all nations, of every condition, and of both sexes, make up one political body, having by divine appointment the same laws, government, the same kind of office-bearers, and spiritual courts, and enjoying the same privileges, 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. And all real believers make up one mystical and spiritual body, as being animated, acted, and ruled by one and the same Spirit of Jesus, Acts xv. 8, 9; for, saith he, "they are all one," or one man.

4. The bond and tie of the church's union is Jesus Christ, and according to the nature of that union which is between him and them, whether external and by a profession only, or internal, and by virtue of saving faith also: so is the nature of that union which is among themselves, either external or political only, or internal and mystical also; and the more that any be united and kept near to Christ, he will be at greater nearness unto those who are Christ's: for, having spoken of their putting on Christ, he subjoineth, "ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

From ver. 29, learn, 1. By virtue of our baptism, and our putting on of Christ in baptism, a right and interest in, and over us, doth accesse to Christ, so that we become in a peculiar manner his, seeing in baptism we enter an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's: for, in place of resuming, "If ye, being baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," (which was the foundation of the present inference laid down, ver. 27,) he resumeth, "If ye be Christ's," implying the one of these doth follow upon the other.

2. The Christian church, or all who are given over unto Christ in baptism, are Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promised inheritance, to wit, with regard had to that distinction of seed, ver. 7, Doct. 8. And hence it followeth, that the charter of this inheritance, or the covenant betwixt God and his people, hath been always for substance one and the same, and that the church of the Old and New Testament are both one, even the self-same seed of Abraham, differing in nothing further than a man of perfect age doth differ from himself being a child, and that there is but one faith, one salvation, and one way of obtaining the same, under both Testaments: for, saith he, "If ye be Christ's, ye are Abraham's seed," speaking to the Christian church.

3. Though all those forementioned be the same under both Testaments, yet there are some accidental differences, whereof one lieth in the different ways of incorporating persons unto that blessed society to whom the heavenly inheritance doth appertain, which then was by being circumcised, in evidence of their subjecting themselves wholly to that burdensome administration, under which the church then was; but now it is sufficient to be baptized, and by so doing to subject ourselves unto Christ: for, (in opposition to the

false apostles, who still maintained that none could be Abraham's seed except they were circumcised, and would subject themselves to the law of Moses) the apostle affirmeth, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed," &c.

CHAPTER IV.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle doth further clear the church's freedom from that ancient policy of the Jewish church by the similitude of a pupil, and his tutors ; which similitude is propounded, ver. 1, 2 ; and applied, first, to the church's bondage under the Old Testament, ver. 3 ; and secondly, to her freedom from that bondage under the New, ver. 4, 5, whereof he giveth an evidence, to wit, God's bestowing upon them the Spirit of adoption, ver. 6, and so concludeth the dispute, ver. 7.

In the second part, he laboureth upon their affections, first, by a sharp reproof for their defection, which he aggregeth, ver. 8, 9, and giveth some instances of it, ver. 10, and hinteth at the great hazard they were in because of it, ver. 11. Secondly, by a most affectionate insinuation, wherein he exhorteth them to be affectionate towards him, and sheweth how dearly he affected them, ver. 12 ; enforcing the former, and evidencing the latter, from his thankful acknowledgment how affectionate they were once to him for the truth's sake, to ver. 17. And obviateth an objection taken from that intense affection which the false apostles seemed to carry unto them, by showing wherein their zeal and affection was defective, ver. 17, and the nature of true zeal, ver. 18. Giving evidences, that this true zeal and affection was in himself towards them, ver. 19, 20.

In the third part, he confirmeth and illustrateth the whole preceding dispute by the history of Abraham's family. And first, he prefaceth, desiring them to make the Old Testament judge in this controversy, ver. 21. Secondly, he propoundeth the typical history, ver. 22, 23. Thirdly, he expoundeth the mystery of the two covenants prefigured by the history, ver. 24—26. Fourthly, he confirmeth the truth of this mystery from Scripture, ver. 27. Fifthly, he maketh application of the whole purpose, first, for information of the way to attain the heavenly inheritance, ver. 28 ; secondly, for consolation against present persecutions, to the end.

VER. 1. Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all ;

2. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

The apostle (being yet further to clear the church's freedom from that legal external policy of the ancient church, whereof he spake so much, chap. iii. ver. 19, &c.) doth use another similitude taken from a pupil, and his tutors and curators. And, first, having made a transition usual

to him, when he is more fully to explicate any former purpose, see chap. v. 16 ; 1 Cor. xv. 50, he setteth down the similitude in these verses to this purpose, that a child though he be heir and owner of all his father's inheritance in hope, and as to right, yet so long as he is a minor, and under age, he differeth nothing from a servant in point of subjection, and as to free government and enjoyment of his rights and goods, ver. 1, and this because he himself is ruled, and his estate managed by tutors and curators ; the continuance of which subjection, the apostle sheweth is ordinarily limited unto the time prescribed by the father, longer than which the heir is not to remain in that state of subjection to his tutors, ver. 2. There are indeed other limits of children's minority prefixed by the law, besides the will of the father ; but he mentioneth this, because it only doth quadrate to the present purpose for which the similitude is made use of.

From this usual custom among men, approved of here by the Spirit of God, being considered in itself and without respect had to that spiritual purpose unto which it is applied afterwards, learn, 1, So licentious is youth, where there is no restraint, and so foolish, as being destitute of experience, and more ruled by the inundation of impetuous passions than force of reason ; that it is much conducing (both for a man's self, and for the public good of the society among whom he liveth) he be first subjected unto others, and made to obey as a servant, (whereby in progress of time he may attain some wisdom and experience,) before he have absolute power to dispose of his own estate, and obtain dominion over others ; otherwise it could not be so generally agreed unto by all parents, and in all nations, that "the heir as long as he is a child should differ nothing from a servant," which the apostle speaketh of as an approved custom, and excepted against by none.

2. It is the duty of parents, as to provide a competent portion for their children whereupon they may live, when they themselves are dead and gone, so to do what in them lieth to secure their portion for them ; lest it be dilapidated by their children's folly, or any other way rendered useless unto them : for unto this end are tutors and curators provided by the father unto the child ; "But he is under tutors and governors."

3. Though parents are not to give unto their children just cause of irritation, Col. iii. 21, yet they ought not to please them to their hurt, but in some things must cross their humour, to wit, especially when their so doing tendeth evidently to their children's good : for though the heir, even when he is a child, would affect liberty, and absolute dominion over his own estate ; yet the wise parent must keep him "under subjection to tutors and governors."

4. It is no small mercy unto children when God doth prolong the life of parents until they themselves attain to so much age and experience as may enable them to manage their own affairs ; seeing otherwise their person and estate must come under the tuition, government, and reverence of others, who possibly may prove their unfriends : for they must even be "under tutors and governors."

5. Parents would labour to carry themselves with so much equity, wisdom and straightness in providing a worldly portion for their children to live upon, as they do not disoblige those with whom they have commerce; that so they may with some measure of confidence commit the tuition of their children and means to the care and oversight of others, even those whom they shall be necessitated to appoint for "tutors and governors."

6. It is the wisdom of parents to place no such trust of their children and means upon any, though otherwise never so much trustworthy, but that they be limited in, and at a set time be obliged to give an account of their trust. Power and trust is a thing so dangerous, that if it be at the intrusted party's option, there are but few who willingly do part with it: therefore, as for one reason, it is marked here, as a part of the father's providence to prescribe a time, longer than which his child is not to be under tutors and governors: "Until the time appointed by the father," saith he.

VER. 3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

Here he applieth the similitude, showing the church when she was in her infant state under the Old Testament, was kept in bondage and subjection under that rigid and strict administration or outward policy which then was, and serveth for an A B C, or, a rough rudiment, whereby the ancient church was instructed, for the most part, by resemblances taken from earthly and worldly things.

The first doctrine which ariseth from his use-making of an earthly similitude to clear a spiritual truth, is already marked, chap. iii. ver. 15, Doct. 2. Learn, 2. The church of God under the Old Testament was in a state of nonage, and as an infant or child; first, for quantity, as being contained in narrow bounds, once of one family, Gen. iv. 3, 4, and at most, but of one nation, *Psa. cxlviii. 19, 20.* Secondly, in understanding; for although some persons were then endued with more excellent gifts of wisdom and knowledge, than any now, such as Abraham, David, &c.; and though many, even under the New Testament, are but in understanding children and babes, *Heb. v. 12,* yet (considering the more clear revelation of the gospel, which now is, *2 Cor. iii. 18,*) we not only have an opportunity of attaining to much more knowledge now, than they had then, *Matt. xiii. 17,* but also the generality of Christians are much more knowing of gospel mysteries than the body of the Jewish church was, *Matt. xi. 11.* Yea, and those of them who excelled most in knowledge, did see but afar off, *Deut. xviii. 18,* and through a cloud of many dark ceremonies, *Heb. ix. 9,* which now are removed: for, speaking of the Jewish church before Christ came, of which himself was one, he saith, "When we were children."

3. The ancient church was also in a state of bondage: not as if the godly among them had not been heirs by faith to the heavenly inheritance, and partakers of the privilege of adoption, (for

so the similitude should not hold, which compareth the church then to a child who is heir, and by right lord of all things;) but, first, they were tied to a number of ceremonial observances, or worldly rites and figures, which were a kind of bondage and slavery to the outward man, *Acts xv. 10.* Secondly, their inward man was under some degree of bondage also, in so far as by the rigid administration which then was, duties were with much strictness pressed, and covenanted influence for through-bearing in duty, and grace for pardoning their neglect of duty but sparingly revealed, *John i. 17.* "We, when we were children, were in bondage," saith he.

4. The multiplying of bodily significant rites in the matter of worship, is a bringing of the church unto a kind of bondage, and a reducing of her to a state of infancy and minority: for therein did consist a great part wherein the ancient church was, even that they "were under the elements of the world."

VER. 4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

He applieth the similitude yet further unto the church's freedom from the fore-mentioned bondage, which he showeth was brought about at the time resolved upon by God, as most fit for that business; at which time, and in order to the purchase of this freedom, God sent his own Son, the second person in the blessed Trinity, to the world, who was in a miraculous way incarnate, as being conceived in the womb of a virgin, *Isa. vii. 14,* without the company of any man, *Matt. i. 18,* and being so incarnate, did subject himself both to the precepts, *Matt. iii. 15,* and curse of the law, *Phil. ii. 8.* This is, ver. 4. Whereby was brought about, first, the delivery and redemption of those who were under the law, to wit, of all the elect, from the curse of it, *chap. iii. 13,* and of the whole church in general from that rigour and servitude under which she was as to her outward state, *Eph. ii. 15,* for except this be taken in under the redemption spoken of, the apostle's main scope (which is to put a difference betwixt the church under the Old Testament, and the church under the New, as to her bondage and freedom) should not be touched; especially seeing believers then were redeemed from the curse of the law, as well as believers now, *Habak. ii. 4.* And, secondly, hereby was procured our receiving or enjoying the "adoption of sons," whereby is not meant only the benefit of adoption in itself, (for believers under the Old Testament were the adopted children of God, *Jer. xxxi. 9;*) but also, and mainly, a clearer manifestation of that privilege, and a more free use and fruition of it, whereby the godly under the New Testament do not only attain to a clearer insight in their adoption, and the dignity following upon it, *Rom. viii. 15,* but also to the actual enjoyment of their inheritance in part, or of the graces of God's Spirit in a greater measure than the ancient church did,

Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, which is held forth as a consequence of our freedom from that rigorous discipline and government under which they were.

From ver. 4, learn, 1. [The time when God in his providence bestoweth a mercy upon his church, or particular believers in the church, 1 Pet. v. 6, will, upon an exact survey of all circumstances, be found the full time, in so far as it is in the most considerable respects the fittest time for the bestowing of it, which holdeth also with the time wherein he afflicteth his people, 1 Pet. i. 6. He doth all things well and in season, Psa. xciv. 18; for in place of saying Christ was sent unto the world at the time appointed of the Father, relative to that part of the similitude, which is, ver. 2, he saith: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son."

2. We are not to wonder, or curiously inquire, why Jesus Christ did come no sooner to the world, or why the church's delivery from her external bondage was so long delayed, seeing all these things were so ordered of God, and did come to pass in the full and fit time: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son."

3. Jesus Christ had a being and subsistence before his incarnation, he was even from all eternity truly God, Prov. viii. 23, for he is, "sent forth" before "he was made of a woman."

4. The Father cannot but accept the obedience of Christ in name of those for whom it is offered, and who do lay hold upon it by faith; seeing Christ did not come of himself, but was sent by the Father to pay, in obedience to the law, that he might redeem those that were under the law: for, "God sent his Son," to wit, not by dispatching him from one place to another, (for the Son being God is present in all places, and can be absent from none,) but by making him appear invested with the human nature, which before he was not.

5. Jesus Christ is God's Son in a way proper to himself alone, as being his only Son by nature, John i. 14; the eternally begotten Son of the Father, Psa. ii. 7; and the express image of the Father's glory, Heb. i. 3; for it is of him he speaketh, while he saith, "God sent his Son."

6. It behoved our Mediator to be true man, God's unchangeable justice so requiring, that the same nature which sinned should also suffer for sin: for he "was made of a woman."

7. Christ's human nature was miraculously formed by the Holy Ghost in the womb of a virgin without the company of any man; whence it followeth that he was free from the guilt of Adam's first sin, and consequently of original sin, which descendeth from Adam unto all his posterity, who come of him by ordinary generation, Gen. v. 3, but Christ did not so come of him; for he "was made of a woman," and not begotten by a man, Matt. i. 18.

8. The body of Christ was not created in heaven, and conveyed to the womb of the virgin, and from her to the world without taking of its substance from her, as water is conveyed through a conduit, but it was framed in the virgin and of her substance: for "he was made of a woman."

9. Though there be two natures in Christ, as being both God and man, yet he is but one per-

son; for the same Son who was sent by the Father is "made of a woman."

10. By virtue of this personal union of the two natures in Christ, those things which are only verified in the one nature, are attributed unto and spoken of the whole person; for to be made of a woman (which agreeth only to the human nature) is ascribed to the person of the Son: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman."

11. Jesus Christ being thus incarnate was, in respect of his human nature, while in the state of humiliation, truly subjected to the law, and accordingly conformed himself unto it, whatsoever law it was, whether general or moral, which all men are obliged unto, Luke ii. 51; or more special, positive, and ceremonial, which the Jews and children of Abraham were bound to obey, Matt. iii. 15; or yet more particular of a redeemer and saviour, which he himself only was obliged unto, even to die for us, Psa. xl. 6—8; for, saith the apostle, "he was made under the law."

12. Though Christ, as he was a creature, whose will cannot be the supreme law, was thus bound to subject himself to the law, yet it doth not follow hence, that therefore he did not fulfil the law for us, but for himself only, because this obligation did flow from his taking on the human nature, which he did freely and for our good: for upon his being "made of a woman," he was also "made under the law," otherwise he was free from the law.

From ver. 5, besides what is marked upon chap. iii. 13, learn, 1. Not only Christ's death and sufferings, which commonly go under the name of his passive obedience, but also his active obedience to the law, in all those things, and those things only wherein we were obliged, is imputed unto us as our righteousness and price, whereby we are redeemed from the law's curse: for "he was made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law." So that the price of our redemption and his subjection to the law, are of equal extent.

2. As all men by nature are under the curse, Eph. ii. 3, and irritating power of the law, Rom. vii. 5, and the Jewish church were under that ancient rigid dispensation of the law, binding them chiefly to the observation of many costly and burthensome ceremonies, see ver. 3; so no less was required in order to a redemption, whether from the one or the other, than the incarnation of the Son of God, and his obedience (both by doing and suffering) to the law of God: only with this difference, the elect were redeemed under the Old Testament from the curse and irritating power of the law, by virtue of Christ's obedience, while it was yet to be actually performed: for though it be otherwise in natural causes, yet a moral cause, not present in being, but only supposed as future, may have its effect: but the redemption of the Jewish church from that rigid dispensation of the law, was not effectuate before Christ was actually incarnate, and did give real obedience to the law, God having so ordered that those legal shadows should not vanish until Christ, the substance of them, did come: for it is with relation to this, as a main part of his present scope, that the apostle saith: "God sent forth his Son, to redeem them that were under the law."

3. The outward administration of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament, had some influence upon the ancient church, even as to the inward state of particular believers, in so far that though the godly then did partake of the same blessings whereof we partake now; yea, and some particular persons were endued with greater gifts of the Spirit than many now are; yet greater plenty and abundance of grace is bestowed upon the church in the time of the gospel, if we respect the body of the church and faithful in general, than was bestowed before Christ came: for the apostle, putting a difference betwixt those two times, speaketh of "receiving the adoption of sons," as a thing proper to the days of the gospel, not as if the spirit of adoption had been altogether withheld from the ancient church, but because it was then tempered with the spirit of servitude, the way to heaven not as yet clearly manifested, Heb. ix. 8, and is now bestowed in a more ample, clear, and plentiful measure; for it is not unusual in Scripture that this should be affirmed of one, and as it were tacitly denied of another, which is more illustrious in one than in another, though it be common to both, Matt. xv. 24, according to which rule the following sixth verse must be expounded.

VER. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

He giveth an evidence of their having received the adoption of sons in a more clear and plentiful measure under the New Testament, to wit, God's sending forth the Holy Spirit, the third person in the blessed Trinity, and making him manifest his presence by his special and supernatural gifts in the hearts of believers, whereby they were enabled like little children to own and call upon God as their Father; and this without any distinction of Jew or Gentile, which seemeth to be hinted at by the two epithets given to God, both signifying the same thing, the one "Abba," a Syriac word, which language was then commonly spoken among the Jews; the other a Greek word, rendered "Father," which was most commonly used among the Gentiles. Now this of God's sending forth his Spirit under the New Testament, is not to be so understood, as if he had not been sent forth into the hearts of believers under the Old Testament, but that he is now poured out in a greater measure, Joel ii. 28.

DOCTRINES.

1. There are three Persons in the blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, all spoken of here: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son."

2. The Spirit here spoken of, is not a naked quality, or operation and work only, but a person subsisting of himself, as appeareth from this, that he is said to be sent forth, which agreeth only to persons; "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son."

3. He is a divine person, and no mere creature; for he dwelleth in the hearts of all believers, which can be said of no person but God; "God

hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."

4. The Holy Spirit proceedeth both from the Father and the Son; for he is sent by the Father, and is the "Spirit of his Son;" and is so called here, because the apostle is to evidence their sonship by the operation of this Spirit; which sonship of theirs is grounded upon Christ, Rom. viii. 17.

5. Whoever have this high dignity of adoption conferred upon them, must also have the Spirit of God given to reside, not in their brain only, to fill them with the gifts of knowledge, as he may be in hypocrites, Matt. vii. 22, but in their hearts also, by making a gracious change there, Eph. iv. 23, to be diffused from thence, as from the first principle of life, Prov. iv. 23, through all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body, 1 Thess. v. 23; for, saith he, "Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts."

6. According as believers do attain to a larger insight into this excellent benefit of adoption, and a greater measure of the fruits of it, there will be a proportionable measure of the Spirit's indwelling and manifesting of himself in his gracious operations, especially in his assisting and furnishing for the duty of prayer: for he proveth they had received a clear insight in this privilege of adoption, and the more free use and fruition of it, because the Spirit was more plentifully bestowed to dwell in their hearts; "And because ye are sons," saith he, "God hath sent forth," &c.

7. Though the exercise of faith, love, hope, and other graces in the duty of prayer, and at other occasions, doth flow from the renewed soul, as the proper inward and vital cause of those actions, so that properly we, and not the Spirit of God, are said to believe, repent, pray, &c. Rom. x. 10; yet, because the Spirit doth not only create, and preserve those gracious habits in the soul, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, but also exciteth the soul to act, and assisteth it in acting according to them, Phil. ii. 13, without which actuating, exciting and assisting grace, habitual grace in us could do nothing, John xv. 5; therefore is it, that the exercise of those graces is ascribed to the Spirit of God, as the external efficient cause thereof; for which reason, our affectionate and believing prayers are ascribed here unto him; "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, crying, Abba."

8. There is an holy vehemency and fervour required in prayer, opposite to careless formality and deadness; for praying is here called crying, which is an usual evidence of fervency and earnestness; and the doubling of the word, Father, maketh for the same purpose; "Crying, Abba, Father," or, "Father, Father."

9. This holy vehemency and fervour consisteth not so much in the lifting up of the external voice, as in the inward bensal [heating] and serious frame of the spirit; it is a cry, not of the mouth, but of the heart; "Into your hearts, crying."

10. Besides this fervency and earnestness requisite in prayer, there would be also a confident familiar owning of God, joined with reverence to him as a Father: for the Spirit maketh them to call upon him by the name of Abba, Father.

VER. 7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Here he concludeth from what is said, first, that under the New Testament we are no more servants, as being redeemed from that legal yoke of bondage under which the ancient church was; and, secondly, that we are sons, and by consequence heirs of God, which is verified mainly in real believers under the New Testament, in so far as they are sons come to age, and heirs past tutory, actually partaking of their father's inheritance in a larger measure than believers did under the Old Testament, as was explained, ver. 5; all which privileges are bestowed upon us through Christ, and through virtue of his coming unto the flesh.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is a safe way of reasoning upon the observation of the saving effects of God's Spirit in ourselves, to conclude that we are in a state of grace, even the adopted children of God: for the Spirit of God by the apostle doth so reason in this place, "Because he hath sent forth his Spirit into your hearts: wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son."

2. The rare privileges which are bestowed upon believers, chiefly under the New Testament, as they do exceed in some degrees those which the generality of believers enjoyed under the Old; so they are many, and all of them so linked together, as in one golden chain, that where one of them is, the rest are also; and it is our duty, having attained to know our enjoying of any one of them, thence to gather that we have all the rest; for the apostle reckoneth a number of such privileges, which, as to the degree wherein they are bestowed, are proper to the days of the gospel, and doth always from the former infer the latter; "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God."

3. Though the natural Son of God be only one, even Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14, yet every man who hath the Spirit of God dwelling in his heart, is his son by grace and adoption, even they who by nature are children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, for from God's sending forth his Spirit into their hearts, he concludeth, "Wherefore thou art a son."

4. Our right to the heavenly inheritance, as also the possession of it, whether that which is begun here in the kingdom of grace, or which shall be completed hereafter in the kingdom of glory, doth follow upon our sonship and adoption; so that God, of rebels doth first make us sons, and then none can challenge him of injustice for bestowing upon us the inheritance of children; "And if a son, then an heir of God," saith he.

5. As none since the fall ever was, or shall be lifted up to that high dignity of being sons and daughters to the Lord Almighty, or could lay any just claim to heaven and glory as his inheritance, but by virtue of Christ's obedience and death, whereby all those high and precious privileges, being formerly forfeited and lost, were

again recovered: so, the actual exhibition of Christ in the flesh, and the real payment of the price by Christ, did bring with it (God having so appointed) a larger measure and higher degree of those privileges to be bestowed upon believers after that time, than was ordinarily enjoyed by believers formerly: for he is speaking here mainly of that higher degree of freedom, and of that more evident and clear sight of and right to the inheritance, together with the fuller measure of its possession in the graces of God's Spirit, which is proper to the days of the gospel; and sheweth all this cometh through Christ, to wit, his actual incarnation, obedience, and death.

VER. 8. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

The apostle (having now sufficiently confirmed by Scripture and reason, the church's freedom from that ancient legal dispensation, and more especially from the ceremonial law) doth now, in the second part of the chapter, labour upon their affections, to work them up towards the embracing of this truth, both by sharp reproofs, and most affectionate insinuations.

And first, that he may fasten a reproof upon them for their begun defection the more convincingly, he sheweth, when that legal dispensation was in force, they, to wit, the Galatians who were of the Gentiles, were ignorant of the true God, and worshipped for gods those things which by nature and really were no gods, but in opinion only; and consequently they were not born or brought up under the pedagogy of the law, as the Jews were, who therefore might pretend some excuse for their unwillingness to depart from it, which those Galatians could not, ver. 8; and secondly, that he may make their defection yet more inexcusable, and convince them of great ingratitude to God in it, he mentioneth the happy condition which they were brought unto before they made this defection, to wit, they had attained to the knowledge of God in Christ, and this not by any industry of their own, Rom. ix. 16, or for any merit or worth in them. Deut. vii. 7, but were herein prevented by mercy in God, who had first known them, having from all eternity elected, Eph. i. 4, and in time effectually called them to the knowledge of himself, Gal. i. 15, 16; thirdly, from those grounds he doth, with a kind of admiration at their ingratitude and folly, fall upon them with a sad reproof for their turning again, and desiring to be in bondage, and under subjection to the observation of those Mosaical elements or ceremonies, see ver. 3, which he calleth weak, as having never had any power in themselves to produce any spiritual effect, Heb. ix. 9, and now under the gospel have not so much as any figurative or sacramental

use, which formerly they had, as being shadows of Christ to come, Col. ii. 17; he calleth them also beggarly and poor, as not being able to afford any solid consolation unto those who observed them: now the apostle calleth their defection a "turning again," and "desiring to be again in bondage;" not as if they had been ever under that yoke formerly, (for this were contrary to ver. 8,) but it was a going backward from that measure, towards which they had already advanced; and the word "again," relateth to their act of turning, and desire of bondage, for they had been under bondage formerly, to wit, unto idolatry, from which they were converted: but it doth not relate to the weak and beggarly elements, under which they never had been, ver. 9.

From ver. 8, learn, 1. However nature's light doth serve to make us know there is a God, and that he ought to be served, Rom. i. 19, yet all the knowledge of God thereby attained, is nothing else but ignorance, in so far as it leaveth us destitute of the knowledge of God in Christ, without which there is no salvation, Acts iv. 12; for in this respect, these Galatians are said to have been ignorant of God, while they lived in Gentilism, although even then they had some knowledge of God, as other Gentiles had, Rom. i. 19. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God."

2. When people are destitute of that knowledge of God which the written word affordeth, or though they have it, yet will not follow it, but give themselves up to be guided by those notions of a Deity with which the light of nature doth furnish them, they cannot but miscarry far in their apprehensions of God, and in the nature of that worship which is due unto him: for the Galatians, following this guide, did worship plurality of false gods, when they ought to have satisfied themselves with that one only true God, Matt. iv. 10. "Ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods."

3. Men are naturally inclined to feign some representation of the Godhead unto themselves by things which incur in the outward senses, whether sun, moon, stars, gold, silver, wood or stone, that hereby at first they may be only kept in remembrance of God, Exod. xxxii. 1; from which they do easily advance further to give divine worship unto those images and representations, and so "do service unto those who by nature are no gods," as these Galatians did.

4. There is not any kind of religious worship or service, under any name whatsoever, to be given unto any creature, but to God only, as the giver of it would not commit idolatry; for here, the "doing of service unto those who by nature are no gods," is condemned, and it is the same worship and service, as is clear to any who understand the first language, which the papists affirm may be given to saints and angels.

5. It is not unprofitable, but very necessary sometimes for converted Christians, to be put in remembrance of that sinful and miserable case wherein they were before conversion; and this, as for other reasons, so, that hereby they may be made to prize, highly esteem, and be thankful to that free grace which showed pity on them; for so the apostle mindeth them of the time when they "knew not God"

6. The more of outward engagements unto a sin or error by education, or former instruction, are lying upon a people or person, they are in some sense the more excusable, and at least, to be pitied, Acts xvii. 30; and the fewer engagements there be of that kind, they are the more inexcusable, and the less to be pitied: for he aggregeth the sin of those Galatians in hankering after the Jewish ceremonies from this, that then, or in the time of the church's minority (spoken of, ver. 3,) they were not under that yoke, and so not engaged by education and former instruction to adhere unto them, as the Jews were; "Not knowing God, they served them which by nature were no gods."

From ver. 9, learn, 1. Such are the riches of mercy in God, that he doth sometimes convert and save the most debauched and graceless sinners; and therefore we are not to despair even of such: for these Galatians, who did once serve idols, were afterwards made to know God, as the word signifieth, "and were known of God."

2. People would labour to inform themselves in the knowledge of God according to the written word, as they would remove an otherwise invincible bar standing in the way of their conversion; for God can neither be served, obeyed nor trusted upon, except he be known. Hence the converted state of these Galatians, is set forth by their knowing of God; "But now, after that ye have known God."

3. Then is God known aright and savingly when he is known in Jesus Christ, according as he is held forth in the gospel, without whom, God is a consuming fire, and in and through whom, he is well pleased, Matt. iii. 17; for then, and not while then, are the Galatians said to know God, when they know him in Christ revealed in the gospel; "But now, after that ye have known God."

4. So tender ought we to be of God's honour in the work of man's conversion, as that we maintain or affirm nothing which may, though but seemingly, ascribe the praise of that work either in whole or in part, to man's own free-will, industry and pains, or withdraw any part of it from the alone efficiency of God's powerful and free grace, who worketh in us both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 13. Hence the apostle, having spoken of their knowing God at their conversion, which might seem to attribute somewhat to themselves, he addeth by way of correction, "or rather are known of God," ascribing thus the whole work of their conversion to God's preventing grace.

5. Sinners in an unconverted state, are such of whom God taketh no notice or knowledge, to wit, so as to be familiar with them, or to communicate special and saving blessings upon them; as also the contrary is implied to be the privilege of true converts, while he saith those Galatians, now converted, were known of God, which implieth, that before conversion they were not known of him in the sense here meant: "Or rather are known of God"

6. The more of mercy hath been received by a people or person, and particularly the greater measure of knowledge they have attained unto, their after declining is capable of the more sad

and weighty aggravations, but chiefly the scandalous failings of the truly regenerate, are extremely heinous; for he mentioneth their knowing God, and being known of God, hereby to aggravate their apostasy and defection.

7. Holy zeal will teach a man to speak with so much contempt, as reason will afford him warrant for, of any thing which is so pleaded for, as to encroach upon the honour due to Christ, or upon any of his offices, whatever respect hath been due, or yet is, to that thing otherwise; for though the Levitical ceremonies were once to be religiously observed, as a part of divine worship leading to Christ, chap. iii. 24; and though they were even at this time, when the apostle wrote, to be held, and were held in some esteem, the free use of them being permitted to the weak Jews until they should have an honourable burial, Rom. xiv. 3, &c. and this justly, because they were once a divine ordinance; yet when the false apostles did urge them upon the Gentiles, whether as a part of necessary commanded worship, thereby encroaching upon Christ's royal and legislative power, and tying the conscience where he left it free, or as a part of their righteousness before God, encroaching thereby upon Christ's priestly office, whose obedience and suffering is our only ransom and righteousness, Eph. v. 2; the apostle is bold to give them the name of "weak and beggarly rudiments."

8. People may advance very far in the way of Christianity, and yet make a foul retreat afterwards in the course of defection and apostasy; which contributeth nothing to that foul error of the total and final apostasy of the saints, (see chap. i. ver. 6, Doct. 6;) for these Galatians, after they were known of God, "turned again to the weak and beggarly elements."

9. Though apostates and authors of defection pretend to never so much of reason to justify their apostasy and declining, Rom. iii. 31, and vi. 1; yet, upon an exact survey, all their reasons will appear to be mere pretences, and their practice so absurd and irrational, that men of composed spirits, and not demented as they are, cannot but wonder at it: for, the apostle falleth upon their defection, not without admiration at their absurdity and folly, "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?" saith he.

10. As defection and apostasy is a voluntary sin, and usually floweth from an itching desire after new-fangled errors, arising from a kind of loathing at old truths, 2 Tim. iv. 3; so, the more a man is carried with the full bensal [beating] of affection and desire towards a sin, he is the more guilty before God; for their sin is aggregated from this, that they "desired again to be in bondage:" the word rendered "desired," signifieth to will a thing earnestly and with great desire.

VER. 10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

He giveth an instance or example of those elements, unto which they had turned, to wit, their observing such distinctions of times for sacred use, as were observed by the Jewish church, according to God's direction by Moses; and he giveth instance of a fourfold distinction of times,

first, in days, such were their sabbaths, and new-moons, Numb. xxviii. 9—11. Secondly, months, to wit, the first, Numb. xxviii. 16, and the seventh, Numb. xxix. 1, &c. Thirdly, times or seasons, whereby are meant their anniversary feasts, as the passover, Exod. xii. 3, &c. Pentecost, Lev. xxiii. 16, and feast of tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 24. Fourthly, years, to wit, every seventh year of release, Lev. xxv. 2, and the fiftieth year of Jubilee, Lev. xxv. 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister is not to insist upon the reproof of sin in general, but would wisely condescend upon some particular instances of those sins whereof the party reproveth is guilty: for, hereby reproofs are more convincing, piercing, and not so easily slighted, or forgotten as otherwise: thus the apostle giveth an instance of the sin formerly reproveth, in their "observing days, and months, and times, and years."

2. Though the placing of some difference among days and times be lawful, as the keeping one day of seven holy to the Lord above the rest, according to the fourth command, and the setting apart of some times and seasons for certain civil uses, as sowing, reaping, keeping fairs and markets, Gen. viii. 22; as also the occasional sanctifying of some days when God calleth us to it, for the work of humiliation, or thanksgiving, Mark ii. 20; yet all superstitious observation of days (see upon Col. ii. 16, Doct. 5,) is unlawful, as being here condemned either expressly or by consequence; "Ye observe days, and months," &c.

VER. 11. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

He concludeth the former reproof, and maketh it nervous and piercing, by showing their defection was such, as if continued in, would render all the great pains and labour, which he, as a minister of Christ, did undergo amongst them, to be for no purpose and in vain, as to any good which they should reap by them; in a word, it would condemn them: and to make his reproof the more taking, he doth sweeten it somewhat, while he expresseth their hazard, not as one unconcerned, and caring nothing for it, but as a tender father forecasting, and fearing what may hurt his dearest child.

DOCTRINES.

1. The office of the ministry, being faithfully gone about, will not be found a life of ease, but hath so much of toil, labour, fainting and weariness going along with it, as any other employment whatsoever: for Paul expresseth the conscientious discharging of his ministry by a word, signifying not simply to labour, but to labour painfully, with much travail, toil, strife, and earnestness, even until fainting and weariness; "Lest I have bestowed upon you labour," saith he.

2. A minister ought not to satisfy himself in this, that he hath done his duty, without further care what fruit his labours have upon the people; but he must also be no less anxious and solicitous about the success of, and the people's profiting by his pains, than he was concerning his own

through-bearing in the exercise of his calling before the people; for "Paul did fear lest he had bestowed his labour in vain upon them."

3. The most lively preachers and painful ministers will sometimes see so little fruit of their labours, and so much iniquity among the people of their charge, as may furnish them with just grounds to profess their fears, that few or none are saved by their ministry: for even "Paul doth fear lest he had laboured in vain among those Galatians."

4. A faithful minister is not to sit down discouraged, and quit his station upon his observation of little or no fruit of his labours amongst the people, but must hold on in his duty notwithstanding, as knowing his labour will not be lost as to himself and from the Lord, Isa. xlix. 4; for Paul ceaseth not to warn, reprove, and instruct these Galatians, although he "feared lest he had laboured in vain among them."

5. It is hardly conceivable how men can live and die, maintaining both in opinion and practice the doctrine of justification either in whole, or in part, by their own works done in obedience to the law, and yet be saved: for Paul conceiveth his labour should be in vain among those Galatians, and consequently that they would be damned, if they did continue in that error chiefly, whereby they joined the works of the ceremonial law with Christ in the point of justification.

VER. 12. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

The apostle, knowing that these Galatians were alienated in their affections from him, and fearing lest, from his present severity and sharpness towards them, they should apprehend that he was alienated from them also, therefore he setteth himself to cure both the certain evil, and feared mistake; and this by requesting them, as brethren, that they would keep intimate affection towards him as to another self, or as if he had been themselves; for so much doth the expression "be as I" bear; and assureth them that he was so affected towards them, even the same which he formerly was, and that his present severity did not flow from hatred, or a spirit of private revenge against them, seeing they had never done any personal injury to him, to wit, but in so far as they had wronged Christ and truth; and therefore leaveth it unto them to look upon him, as a man who was pleading the cause of Christ, and not venting any private grudge of his own.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the servant of Jesus Christ must use severity in the way of reproof and rebuke towards those who are gone astray, yet, because people are apt to conceive that his so doing doth flow from an embittered spirit, and so to slight both him and his rebukes, 2 Chron. xviii. 7, therefore he would in wisdom sometimes mix his severity with gentleness, and his rebukes with exhortations and entreaties, as looking not so much upon what their sin deserveth, as what is most convenient for gaining them to repent-

ance: hence the apostle, having sufficiently rebuked them, cometh now to request and entreat; "Brethren, I beseech you," saith he.

2. As error, above any other sin, doth estrange the person erring from any who oppose them in their way, though they were even their most faithful pastors: so it is the duty of ministers not to be careless whether they have the affection of such or not, upon pretence that no cause of disrespect is given by them; but they are to follow on upon their erring people, and beg their favour and affection, if it cannot be otherwise gained; and this mainly for the people's profit, and that hereby they may be put in a capacity to do them good: for, Paul, apprehending that these erring Galatians were estranged from him in their affections, he beggeth their favour, while he saith, "I beseech you, be as I am."

3. The mutual love and affection betwixt a people and a pastor, ought to be so intimate, as if they both were but one person, every one minding the good of another, as of themselves, constructing aright of the actions of another, as they would have others construct of their own, and rejoicing at the advantage, and grieving for the hurt of one another, as if it were their own; and this because Satan doth by all means labour to drive in some wedge of jealousy to rend them asunder, that so the minister may be useless unto the people, and they a heart-break unto him: this intimacy of affection is here entreated for by Paul from the Galatians, "Be as I am;" and was made conscience of by him towards them, "for I am as ye are," saith he.

4. It is no small part of that divine wisdom required in a minister, so to hate, and testify against the sins of people, as not to relent in his respect to their persons; so to persecute their ill, as to remain tenderly affectionated towards their good: for, thus did Paul; "I am as ye are," saith he.

5. As people are apt to apprehend that the zeal of a minister against their sin doth flow from a spirit of revenge and spite against their persons, for some real or apprehended injury done unto him by them, so it is most base and sinful for a minister to intend and sharpen his zeal, even though against sin, from any consideration of that kind; and a thing, the very groundless suspicions whereof, he would labour to wipe off: for so doth Paul here, by showing they had done him no wrong; and therefore it could not be in reason supposed, that in his sharp rebukes he was venting his spleen, or a spirit of private revenge; "Ye have not injured me at all," saith he.

VER. 13. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

15. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked

out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

The apostle insisteth to clear that he was not changed in his affection towards them; and withal, by showing how affectionate they were once to him for the truth's sake which he did preach, he pointeth at their great inconstancy, if so he may, even by setting forth their deserved praises, make them ashamed of their present estrangedness unto him, and put on the same affection towards him and to truth, which once they had, according to his proposed scope, v. 12. In order to which, he declareth they were so far from doing him any personal injury, for which they might apprehend him to bear them at hatred, that, upon the contrary, they had shown much love and reverence unto him; which he cleareth, first, by bringing to their remembrance, how that when he came to preach the gospel first unto them, while they were yet in paganism, he did preach "through much infirmity of the flesh;" whereby is meant, not only his humble way of deportment in his whole ministry without the show of human wisdom and authority, (as weakness or infirmity is taken, 1 Cor. ii. ver. 3, compared with ver. 1,) but also and mainly those many sufferings he did undergo from the enemies of the gospel among them, which Paul calleth elsewhere his infirmities, 2 Cor. xii. 10, and they are called "of the flesh," because his "flesh," or outward man, was most afflicted by them; the spirit, or inward man, being underpropped by God, 2 Cor. iv. 16. This is contained, ver. 13. Which sufferings are described from the end which God proposed to himself in them, which was "Paul's temptation," or trial, to wit, of his faith, patience, constancy, and other graces. Secondly, by acknowledging with thankfulness their respective carriage towards him all that time; particularly, they did not despise his sufferings, as taking no notice of them, neither did they reject him, or his ministry, because of his sufferings; but did receive him, and the truth delivered by him, though an afflicted, persecuted man, with as much reverence and obedience, as if it had been preached by an angel, or by Christ himself in his own person: this is all he meaneth by their "receiving him as Christ Jesus;" for if they had given him the honour due unto Christ in other respects, he would not have made mention of it without detestation, see Acts xiv. 14. This is ver. 14. And thirdly, having, as it were in a parenthesis, mentioned how happy a people they then were, even by their own grant, and this with a kind of exclamation (for the words do read, "How great," or, "of what sort was the blessedness," &c.) he cleareth their respect to him yet further, by testifying it was not counterfeit and in words only, but real, and so fervent, that they were ready to have bestowed any thing upon him which possibly they could, and might tend to his advantage and encouragement in the work of the gospel, even their very eyes not being excepted, if so it had been possible, that they being plucked out, could have been useful unto him. This is contained, ver. 15.

From ver. 13, learn, 1. It seemeth good unto God to commit the heavenly treasure of the

gospel unto earthen vessels, and to exercise those whom he employeth to preach the gospel, what with the sense of their own infirmities from within, what with heavy trouble from without; that so, while nothing appeareth in them to outward appearance but what is subject to reproach and contempt, we may ascribe the glory of any good which is done by them, not to men, but to God, 2 Cor. iv. 7; for this is the ordinary lot of other preachers, which Paul sheweth here was his, even that "through infirmity of the flesh he preached unto them."

2. When the gospel cometh first into a place, then especially doth Satan stir up all his malice, and all that interest which he hath in wicked men, for creating trouble unto those whom God employeth in the preaching of it; if so he may give the gospel a dash, at its very first entry: thus "Paul preached the gospel at first through infirmity of the flesh;" whereby is meant mainly, if not only, those hard sufferings which he did meet with, as appeareth from the name of "temptation," or trial, which he giveth to this infirmity, ver. 14.

3. It is the duty of called ministers to go on with courage in the work of the Lord, notwithstanding of any discouragement of that kind, receiving manfully the first onset chiefly of Satan's fury, as knowing their ceding to him will make him more cruel, and their resisting of him will make him flee from them, Jam. iv. 7; for "Paul, even through infirmity of the flesh, preached to them at first."

4. Whoever do thus set their face against the fury of persecutors, it shall be no grief of heart, but matter of joy unto them afterwards, to call to mind what hardships they have been made to undergo of that sort, as finding the truth preached by them to have been thereby confirmed, and their own fidelity in their calling, and to the good of souls, manifested, and the power of God made known, by making his truth spread the further, the more it was opposed: for Paul calleth to mind his sufferings, when he preached the gospel, as not being ashamed of them, because thereby all the advantages presently named were attained; "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel."

From ver. 14, learn, 1. God's design in measuring out an hard lot and great opposition to those who are engaged in the work of the ministry, is not to discourage, but to try them, by making his grace in them shine the more clearly, the more they are put to exercise it under their hardships and straits: for Paul calleth his "infirmity" or sufferings, his "temptation" or trial, see Jam. i. 2; Luke viii. 13, and xxii. 28, "and my temptation which was in my flesh."

2. As it is too ordinary for those who are at ease, to contemn, neglect, and be careless of the heavy afflictions and sufferings of others, chiefly of the ministers of Jesus Christ, as if they were wholly unconcerned in what they suffer; so it speaketh much to the commendation of a people, when they lay to heart, and take notice of the sufferings of their faithful ministers, as if they were their own, and do sympathise with them under all their hardships: for he commendeth the Galatians from this, that "they despised not

his temptation," or trial and affliction; the word signifieth, they did not set it at nought, as not worthy to be taken notice of, and so they have been duly affected with it.

3. So little love have men naturally to the gospel, that they are ready to take occasion from any thing, to make them cast at it: even the necessary trials and afflictions with which God seeth fit to exercise the preachers of the gospel, are sufficient ground for many to reject both the persons and doctrine of ministers: for Paul, commending these Galatians for their not rejecting of him, because of his infirmities, sheweth the contrary sin to be very ordinary; "Nor rejected, but received me," saith he.

4. It is high matter of commendation unto a people, when the outwardly base and contemptible condition of ministers doth not diminish any thing of that due respect which they owe to the message which they carry: for these Galatians are commended from this, that notwithstanding of his "temptation, they rejected not, but received him as an angel of God."

5. The faithful ministers of Jesus Christ are to be held in high estimation for their work's sake; so that as (all due respect being given unto their persons, 1 Tim. v. 17,) the doctrine of truth preached by them may be received with as much faith and reverence, as if an angel from heaven, or Christ himself, were the preacher of it; for they are ambassadors in Christ's place, 2 Cor. v. 20; and the word of God is always truth, and worthy to be received, whoever do preach it, neither doth it borrow any intrinsic authority from the person of the preacher: hence the Galatians are commended, that in this respect they "received Paul as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." (See Luke x. 16.)

From ver. 15, learn, 1. The only thing which maketh a people happy, is to have the doctrine of the gospel (which is the mean of our reconciliation with God in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 18,) preached among them, and to receive this doctrine, and the faithful preachers of it, with all due reverence, love and subjection. The enjoying of honour, riches, and abundance of outward peace, is no blessedness, being compared with this, Psa. iv. 6—7; for the apostle speaketh of these Galatians while they were in that case, "What," or, "how great was then your blessedness?"

2. Injuries received afterwards will not obliterate the inward sense, or mar the outward acknowledgment, of favours formerly received in a thankful mind: for though the Galatians had done no private injury to Paul, ver. 12, yet in their defection from truth, they had wronged him for the truth's sake; and, notwithstanding he proclaimeth those evidences of their love and respect which he had received formerly, both in the former verse, and more expressly here, while he saith, "I bear you record, ye would have plucked out your eyes," &c.

3. The love and reverence which people owe to ministers, ought not to be verbal, and in profession only; but real also, even such as may evidence itself in the hearty bestowing of any thing which may be for their encouragement, or for advancing the work of God in their hands:

for Paul proveth these Galatians had received him as they ought, from their readiness to impart unto him all things necessary and possible for his encouragement: "Ye received me," saith he, "for I bear you record, ye would have plucked out your eyes."

4. Though, as is usually said, charity begins at home, and we be commanded to love our neighbour only as ourself, Matt. xxii. 39; yet there is a certain case, in which we must consider our neighbour not only as a neighbour, but as a special instrument of God, and thus we are, in some respects, to love and prefer him unto ourselves; and especially when he is an instrument employed by God for the defence and propagation of the gospel, we ought to be ready to forsake the dearest things we have in the world, though it were our own hands, eyes, feet—yea and our very life, if so it may promote the work of God in his hands: for in this case it is not our neighbour, but Christ and the gospel which we prefer unto ourselves, according to Matt. x. 37. Hence, because Paul was such an instrument, the Galatians are commended for their readiness "to pluck out their own eyes, and to give them to him."

5. The wisdom and goodness of God hath so provided, that the hands, eyes, and other members of our body, being cut off or plucked out, cannot be serviceable or useful unto the body of any other: hereby preventing the cruelty and tyranny of the greater sort, who would make no scruple to mutilate the bodies of their inferiors, if those mutilated members could serve for any use to themselves afterwards: for, saith he, "If it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes;" importing it was impossible, not simply to pluck them out, but that their eyes, being plucked out, could serve for the same use to him for which they did serve unto themselves.

VER. 16. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

~ The apostle concludeth from what he hath said of their former kindness to him, that he was not now turned their enemy, nor estranged in his affection from them, (for the interrogative hath the force of a vehement denial,) and that they had no reason to think so of him; this only excepted, that with much candour and ingenuity he had declared the truth unto them, in opposition to the errors of the false apostles, the absurdity of which reason is also imported by the interrogative propounded to them.

DOCTRINES.

1. For Christians to entertain malice, or a spirit of private revenge one against another, as it is in any case sinful, so when there hath been no personal injury offered, it is abominable; and hardly can it be conceived that a man of conscience will be guilty of it: for Paul, having declared that they had done him no injury, but shown much love and reverence unto him, denieth that there was any just reason why they could so much as conceive that he was turned an enemy unto them; "Am I therefore become your enemy?"

2. When men are once engaged in a sinful

course, and especially in the way of error, they are so dementate with it, that they can put no difference betwixt it and themselves: they have common friends and enemies; and whosoever is an enemy to it is looked upon by them as an enemy to themselves: for Paul, by telling the truth in opposition to their error, is looked upon as an enemy: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

3. However a faithful minister will readily be mistaken for his freedom and ingenuity in the reproof of sin, as if he were an unfriend and enemy to the person reproved, (when really he can give no such evident proof of his love and respect, *Psa. cxli. 5.*) he is nevertheless to go on in his duty, labouring to obviate all such mistakes and prejudices as he best may: for Paul ceaseth not to tell them the truth, although he was looked upon as an enemy for his so doing; only he laboureth to clear them of their mistake: "Am I therefore become your enemy?" &c.

VER. 17. They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

18. But *it is good* to be zealously affected always in *a good thing*, and not only when I am present with you.

The apostle, in further prosecution of the former purpose, obviateth an objection arising from that fervent zeal, or that intense love joined with serious endeavours to oppose, and a kind of indignation against any thing that might prove hurtful unto them, which the false apostles seemed to carry towards them, beyond what Paul did; so that yet they had reason to doubt of his affection to them. The apostle answereth, It was true, indeed, that the false apostles pretended great love to, and zeal for them; but their zeal was not of the right stamp, as not having that which is truly good for its object, to wit, the edification of those for whom they seemed zealous, but rather their destruction, while all their zealous endeavours did tend to exclude them, and rend their affection from Paul himself, and other faithful pastors; and, again, as their zeal did deviate in the object, so also in the scope proposed, which was, not to gain these Galatians to Christ, but popular applause to themselves; and that Paul, and such as Paul was, being cried down, they alone might be doted upon with a blind kind of zeal and affection, ver. 17; but lest, by condemning their false zeal, he should have seemed to cry down all zeal, therefore he discovereth what true and praise-worthy zeal is, and this, as it seemeth, with an eye to his own practice, whose zeal towards those Galatians, first, was so ordered, that the thing wherunto his zeal for them did carry him, was in itself good, and for their good and edification; secondly, it was constant, so that distance of place, which occasioned an alteration in them towards him, had not made him to alter towards them, ver. 18.

DOCTRINES.

1. See chap. i. ver. 7, Doct. 5, concerning his suppressing the name of the false apostles, where-

by he sheweth more of indignation towards them nor he could have done by giving them any designation, though never so base; "They zealously affect you."

2. Heretical preachers and seducers will be exceedingly fervent and zealous for their erroneous opinions, and pretend much love and affection to the people of God, while they are about to make them embrace their errors: for, saith he, "They," to wit, the false apostles, "zealously affect you."

3. Every thing which goeth under the name of zeal, or which truly hath much of zeal and fervency in it, whether for opinions, or persons, is not to be approved; there being so much of sinful zeal which an hypocrite may have, and therefore is not to be valued or regarded: so doth the apostle speak of their zeal; "They zealously affect you, but not well."

4. There is a rending zeal, which carrieth the person wherein it is with a violent fervour to rend the church of Christ, and to create prejudices in the minds of people against their faithful pastors, while they extenuate their good, 2 Cor. x. 10, and above measure aggregate their sins and infirmities; all such zeal is sinful, and unworthy to be taken notice of: for the apostle proveth that their zeal was not good, from this, that it carried them to rend those Galatians from Paul and the body of the Christian church: "They would exclude you."

5. There is a self-seeking zeal, when men, pretending much love to God and to the good of souls, are really hunting after the breath of applause to themselves, and that they alone may have greatest weight in people's affections; all such zeal is also sinful: for he condemneth the zeal of the false apostles, because their great design in what they did, was to make those Galatians "zealously to affect them."

6. As the great design of false teachers, and the upshot of all their most zealous and fervent endeavours, is to gain credit among the people to their opinions and persons; so the usual method whereby they walk for attaining this end is, first to alienate the minds of people from their own pastors, that so they themselves may be looked upon as only worthy to have room in people's affections; for this was the method of the false apostles, "They would exclude you," to wit, from us, "that you might affect them," saith he.

7. The ministers of Christ would so condemn the counterfeit of saving graces which may be found in hypocrites, as that they do not in the least measure reflect upon the real graces of God's Spirit, which are found only in true believers: for Paul having condemned their false zeal, falleth immediately upon the commendation of true zeal: "But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."

8. It is not enough that the thing which we do be in itself good, except our affections be somewhat warmed with love to the duty, and stirred up with an holy indignation and revenge against any thing which would divert us from it: for this is that zeal which is here commended; "It is good to be zealously affected," saith he.

9. It is required in godly and approved zeal, first, that it be orderly, neither making nor

upholding rents or schisms in the church, and betwixt the people of God and those who are over them in the Lord : for the false ungodly zeal of the false apostles is condemned from this, that they "would have excluded those Galatians from Paul." Secondly, that it be sincere, as aiming, not at base and selfish, but approved ends, such as God's glory, 2 Cor. xi. 2; our own, Rev. iii. 19, and our neighbour's salvation, Col. iv. 13; for their zeal is condemned from this, that their great design in all they did, was to make the Galatians affect them. Thirdly, that it be according to knowledge, Rom. x. 2, as choosing right and approved means for bringing about the proposed end, and not putting forth itself indifferently upon every thing, good or bad, without choice; for, saith he, "It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing." Fourthly, that it be constant; not intending or remitting according as more of prosperity or adversity doth attend the making conscience of our duty, John vi. 26; but always one and the same, notwithstanding of any extrin-sical change of that kind: for, saith he, "It is good to be zealously affected always."

10. A minister would labour to have his conversation so christian, that, if need require, he may give his own practice for an instance or example of any duty which he presseth upon others, as Paul doth here; for, having required constancy in zeal, he hinteth at his own practice, who was zealous for their good always: "And not only when he was present with them."

VER. 19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

20. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

He doth yet further pursue the intended scope, which is to persuade them of his affection to them, by making it yet more appear that his zeal for them was of the right stamp, and not like that of the false apostles; in that, first, he was at great trouble and pains for their good, such as are the pains of a woman in travail. Secondly, his design in all his labour and pains was, not so much to make them affect him, (which was all that his adversaries sought after,) as to get the image of Christ (which being once wrought in them by the means of his ministry, was now marred by their defection) again repaired in them, and its lively lineaments drawn upon them: which expressions of his entire affection are much sweetened by the affectionate style of "little children" given unto them; so that his whole discourse doth breathe out no less affection than that of a tender mother towards her dear child under some languishing disease, or consumption, ver. 19. And, thirdly, that he desired vehemently to be with them face to face, which was no great evidence of any hatred to them, especially considering the end of his desire, to wit, that being more fully acquainted with their case, he might accommodate himself in his speaking to them, whether in meekness or severity, unto their temper; and that because, being now at a distance, he could not understand their temper so exactly, and there-

fore was somewhat perplexed, and in doubt how to deal with them. All which do express to the life how tender, constant, sincere, and well-ordered, his affection and love was towards them, ver. 20.

From ver. 19, learn, 1. There ought to be such a conformity betwixt the heart and the tongue, that the tender and warm expressions of kindness uttered by our tongue may be undoubted evidences of that real kindness and respect which is seated in the heart; otherwise, fair words are but foul flatteries, abominable both to God and man, Prov. xxvii. 14; for Paul doth speak to these Galatians most affectionately, as a mother to her dear children, wherein he would have them to read his very heart: "My little children," saith he.

2. The ministerial calling is an employment of no small labour and pains, partly, because of much labour and diligence which is required to fit a man for that employment, and for every part of it, 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15; Acts xx. 20; and partly, because of many outward troubles and persecutions which do usually attend the faithful discharging of it, Matt. x. 17; but mainly, because the object of that employment is the charge of people, with relation to their spiritual and eternal concerns, Heb. xii. 17, in which, as people are most apt to miscarry, so their miscarrying therein is most dishonourable unto God and dangerous to themselves; and therefore the minister, whose charge doth lie about those, and maketh conscience of his charge, cannot but be much exercised, even to weariness, and the wasting of his natural spirits with a tide of contrary affections, as hopes and fears, joy and sorrow, desire and indignation, &c., 2 Cor. xi. 28. Hence Paul setteth forth the measure of his ministerial pains by the travail of a woman with child: "Of whom I travail in birth," saith he.

3. Though it be God only, who by his own almighty power doth beget us to that new and spiritual life of grace, James i. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 6; yet he maketh use of called ministers as the ordinary means and instruments, by whose ministry his Spirit doth effectually work, and bring about the conversion of sinners, Rom. x. 17, and therefore the honour and title of being spiritual fathers and mothers is conferred upon them; hence it is that Paul not only calleth them his little children, but also saith, "he did travail in birth with them," whereby he compareth himself to a woman in travail, and the work of the ministry to the travail itself, by the means whereof are children born to God.

4. Though those who are once regenerated cannot totally fall away from grace, so as to stand in need of a second regeneration, (for the seed of God abideth in them, 1 John iii. 9,) yet they may so far fall away, as that the new man of grace in them will be much marred, and all lively evidences of their regeneration, lie under-ground and in the dark, and so as that to outward appearance there will be nothing of the life of God in them; for though Paul saith not, he "begot them again;" yet, "he did travail in birth with them again, that so Christ might be formed in them;" which supposeth, that the image of Christ in them was much darkened, the beauty thereof marred, and their spiritual life and motion hid

and hardly discernible, as the life and motion of an unborn child in the womb.

5. The great end of a minister's pains, and that which, not being attained, he is not to cease, or to rest satisfied, is not so much his own exoneration, as to have a near conformity to Christ, and the draughts of his image, consisting both in knowledge, Col. iii. 10, and holiness, Eph. iv. 24, wrought in the hearts and lives of his hearers: for this was aimed at by Paul; "Until Christ be formed in you," saith he.

From ver. 20, learn, 1. The presence of a pastor with his flock is so necessary in order to the entertaining of mutual affection, and the suppression of prejudices when they are yet in the bud, and before they come to any great height, and in order to a minister's better uptaking of the people's case and condition, and to his application of suitable and seasonable remedies; that, (though a minister may sometimes be necessarily withdrawn from his flock, yet) he ought always have a desire to be present with them, without neglecting any occasion, when it offereth, of returning to them; for thus was it with Paul, "I desire to be present with you."

2. A minister ought to take notice, so far as is possible, of the several conditions and dispositions of his people; that hereby he may know how to carry himself, and to speak to them in that way which he conceiveth will be most gaining upon every one, admonishing some, reproving others, comforting and instructing some, and sharply threatening others: for this we conceive is meant by Paul's "changing of his voice," in order to which, he "desired to be present with them;" that so knowing their case, he might the better fit his speech to their condition.

3. As the people of God are not all of one, but of different tempers, some being more tractable, and some more obstinate, some more soft and easy to be wrought upon by the word, and some more obdured, some more subject to heartless discouragements, and others to high and lofty unsoberness of spirit; so that way of dealing in a minister which will be profitable for the one temper will not be so for another; for Paul, being ignorant of their present temper, "stood in doubt of them," as fearing, if he did not fall upon a right way of dealing with them, he might do them more hurt than good.

4. Though a minister may sometimes have reason to doubt what way to take with a people in order to their gaining, and be not a little perplexed lest there be not success answerable to his pains; yet he is not to give over, but must go on doing what is likeliest, and depending upon God for success: so doth Paul here; for, though "he stood in doubt of them," or was perplexed for them, yet he sendeth this epistle to them.

VER. 21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

In the third part of the chapter, the apostle confirmeth and illustrateth the truth of the whole preceding disputation concerning our justification by faith, and not by works, and the abolishing of the ancient legal dispensation of the covenant of grace, and this by the history of Abraham's

family, whereby he sheweth the Lord did prefigure not only the doing away of that ancient dispensation under the days of the gospel, but that also so many as did adhere unto it, (being considered as it was set in opposition to the covenant of grace, by those who sought to be justified by the works of the law,) were kept under the bondage of sin and wrath here, and at last should be banished from the face of God. And, on the other hand, that a more clear dispensation of the covenant of grace should succeed under the New Testament, and that those who, according to the tenor of that covenant, did seek to be justified through faith in Christ, should be the children of God, free from the bondage of ceremonies and of God's wrath here, and possess the heavenly inheritance hereafter.

In order to this, the apostle first prefaceth in this verse by citing his adversaries and all others, who of their own accord, without and contrary to God's command, did put themselves again under the yoke of the Mosaical law, and sought to be justified by the works thereof, (otherwise all believers are under the moral law as the rule of their life, Eph. vi. 2,) he prefaceth, I say, by citing all such to hear what the law itself, or that scripture which is a part of those five books of Moses which are called the law, Rom. iii. 21, doth say to this purpose; and withal he taxeth them indirectly for their not understanding the scope of the law, and of the doctrine relating to it, notwithstanding of their pretending so much to the knowledge of it.

DOCTRINES.

1. The minister of Jesus Christ is so far in the spirit of meekness to condescend to the humours of those who oppose themselves, in order to their gaining, as that he always keeps up his authority amongst and over them, as an ambassador in Christ's stead, 2 Cor. v. 20; for Paul, having for condescendence and tenderness carried himself to them as an affectionate mother, doth now carry the matter with more authority, citing and commanding them to hear a clear refutation of their error; "Tell me," saith he.

2. So ignorant are all men naturally of that righteousness which is of God by faith, that when it is offered they do what they can to reject it, and (such is their pride and madness) go about to establish their own righteousness by works, be-taking themselves to stand or fall according to the sentence of the law and covenant of works; for the Galatians were thus mad, who, rejecting the offer of Christ's righteousness in the gospel, desired to be under the law, to wit, so as to be dealt with by God according to the sentence of it.

3. The doctrine of the written law is so far from giving any patrociny to that dangerous error of justification by works, that this error ariseth mainly from ignorance of the law, and chiefly of that which is the scope of the law, to wit, Christ for righteousness, Rom. x. 4; for Paul doth point at the reason of their so great desire to be under the law, even their not hearing the law, so as to understand it; "Do ye not hear the law?" saith he.

VER. 22. For it is written, that Abraham had

two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

23. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman *was* by promise.

The apostle, in the second place, propoundeth the typical history of Abraham's family, taken from Gen. xvi. and xxi., the sum whereof is, that as Abraham had two sons, to wit, Ishmael and Isaac, (he had also several others by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 2, but these two are only mentioned, as being appointed by God to prefigure the present purpose,) the condition of which two sons did differ in two things, first, that the one, Ishmael, was born of a bondwoman or servant, to wit, Hagar, Gen. xvi. 1, 15, and so was but as a servant himself, and not the heir, Gen. xxi. 10. The other, Isaac, was born of a freewoman, to wit, Sarah, Gen. xxi. 2, 3, who had been never a servant, but mistress, and joined in the government of the family with her husband, and therefore Isaac himself was no servant, but a freeman, even the heir, ver. 22. A second difference did lie in the principle of their generation and birth, for Ishmael "was born after the flesh," or by the ordinary strength of nature, his mother Hagar being a young woman and fit for conception, Gen. xvi. 2; but Isaac was not conceived nor born from any such principle, Sarah, his mother, being ninety years old when she conceived, Gen. xvii. 17, and so, according to the course of nature, unfit for conception, Heb. xi. 12; but he was born "by promise," or by virtue of that promise made to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 16, and the miraculous operation of God, ver. 23.

From this history of Abraham's family, considered in itself, and leaving the mystery prefigured by it to its own place, we learn, 1. The best of men are not perfect, there having been some things even in the holy patriarchs, which were not commended, but only tolerated by God, as a lesser evil for prevention of a greater. Such was their polygamy, or marrying of more wives than one, which, though contrary to the first institution of marriage, Mal. ii. 15, and Matt. xix. 4, 5, 8, yet was practised by many of the patriarchs, as not knowing, or at least not considering what sin was in it, being blinded, partly by the tyranny of common custom, and partly by that great desire which they had to multiply their posterity, that if it were possible the Messiah might have descended of their line. Thus even Abraham had two wives, a bondmaid, and a freewoman.

2. The best of men are in no small hazard to be so far overpowered with temptations to misbelief under the delayed performance of divine promises, and the want of all lawful probable means for the performance of them, as to close with sinful means for bringing of it about, and to repute themselves free from guilt in so doing, as if a good and necessary end could commend a sinful mean for attaining to it; for Abraham, having a promise that the blessed seed should come of him, Gen. xii. 3, and having waited for a child until Sarah, his wife, through age had lost all hopes of conception, is moved, at her desire,

to go in unto Hagar, his bondmaid, that he might obtain seed by her, Gen. xvi. 1, 2, rather than the promise should lie unperformed; "The one by a bondmaid," saith he.

3. The Lord standeth not in need of our sinful means for bringing about of his own gracious work towards us, for after that Ishmael is sinfully begotten upon the handmaid, the Lord maketh Sarah conceive a son miraculously, in whom the promise was to have its accomplishment; "The other by a freewoman."

4. The Lord hath placed in the natures, as of beasts and birds, so of men and women, an ordinary power of generation and conception, whereby one generation may succeed to another, until the heavens be no more, and that men who cannot live any long space of time in their own persons, may in a kind perpetuate their life and memory in their posterity unto all succeeding generations; thus "Ishmael was born after the flesh," or by the ordinary strength of nature.

5. As the power of God is engaged to give a being and subsistence unto every thing contained within the compass of a promise, Isa. xlvi. 11, so it doth accordingly perform, even when all ordinary means and second causes do fail, and become useless for bringing about the thing promised; for a promise being made to Abraham, that Sarah should have a child, she conceiveth and beareth Isaac, "not after the flesh," or according to the ordinary course of nature, but through virtue of that promise; "But he of the freewoman was by promise," saith he.

VER. 24. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

In the third place, the apostle expoundeth the mystery which was lurking under, and prefigured by the former history, in order to which he sheweth, that those things, or the Scripture presently cited, is an allegory; that is, besides the literal historical sense of the words, God intended that the purpose contained in them should shadow forth the state of his church in the following particulars, so that Abraham's two wives did represent the two covenants, to wit, the old covenant, or the covenant of grace under the old administration, Heb. viii. 7, which covenant was greatly mistaken, and did degenerate unto a plain covenant of works, in the sense of many who did adhere unto it. The new covenant, or the covenant of grace under the new administration, Heb. viii. 8. The first of which covenants he sheweth was prefigured by Agar, the bondwoman; and he describeth it, first, from the place where it was first given, to wit, upon mount Sinai. Secondly, from the like effect produced by it with that of Agar, to wit, that as Hagar, so this covenant, especially as it was generally mistaken for a covenant of works, did beget children unto bondage, that is, they who adhered to that

covenant, so taken, were not thereby freed from their bondage to sin, Satan, and God's wrath, chap. iii. 10, and were of a servile, mercenary disposition, as doing whatever they did in God's service, not from love, but slavish fear, and of purpose to merit heaven by their good works, Mark x. 17. This is ver. 24. And (having, as it were in a parenthesis, showed the fitness of the former resemblance, because mount Sinai, where the old covenant was first delivered, is also in God's providence called Agar by the Arabians) he describeth this covenant, thirdly, from those who, in the time of the apostles, did tenaciously adhere to it, by showing that the earthly Jerusalem, or the Jewish church, not, as she was in her best times, but in that present age did answer, that is, as the original doth bear, was in the same rank, or did keep a kind of harmony and concord with that covenant, because that church, and the members thereof, called here her children, did remain in a servile condition, which he showed before, was the fruit of adhering unto this covenant, as it was now adulterated and corrupted, ver. 25. Now, though the Spirit of God maketh use of the history of Abraham's having two wives, to set forth a spiritual mystery, not condemning his fact; yet this doth not justify his polygamy, no more than injustice in stewards is justified by the parable, Luke xvi. 1; it being sufficient that the word of God doth condemn polygamy elsewhere, Mal. ii. 15, and Matt. xix. 4—6.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though there be only one genuine sense and meaning of every place of Scripture, which is sometimes expressed in proper, Gen. i. 1, sometimes in figurative and borrowed speeches, Luke xiii. 32, otherwise, if Scripture had more meanings than one, it should be ambiguous and doubtful, yet this hindereth not, but that the sense of Scripture may be sometimes not simple, but composed, so that there is one thing signified immediately by the words, and another thing immediately by the purpose comprehended in the words, and but mediately by the words themselves, as it is in types and allegories: for this history did immediately set forth the state of Abraham's family, and the state of Abraham's family did shadow forth the state of God's church in the particulars afore-mentioned; "Which things are an allegory," saith he.

2. Though the Spirit of God speaking in Scripture, giveth us express warrant to expound some places of Scripture, as holding forth, by way of type or allegory some further purpose, than what the words do either in their proper or usual acceptation bear; yet it doth not follow hence, that we may without such warrant expound other scriptures after the same manner, or hold forth our witty inventions of that kind, as a part of the meaning intended by the Spirit of God in those scriptures: for the Spirit of God expressly sheweth, that this scripture, or, "those things are an allegory."

3. It is a very usual way of speaking in Scripture, whereby the name of the thing signified, is given to that which doth only signify and represent that thing; so is it in the words of the insti-

tution of the Lord's supper, Mark xiv. 22; and so is it here, where the apostle, speaking of Abraham's two wives, saith, "Those are the two covenants;" not that they were essentially such, but because they did represent and prefigure them.

4. Though the covenant of grace, entered by God with sinners in Christ, hath been but one for substance in all ages of the church, Heb. xiii. 8; yet, there hath been divers ways of administering it, one especially under the Old Testament, and another under the New: hence is it, that this one covenant is held forth as differing from itself, and as if it were not one, but two; for "those are the two covenants," saith he.

5. The covenant of grace, as it was dispensed under the Old Testament, (because the law, and the curse of the law, was then much pressed, and the grace contained therein but darkly propounded,) was therefore generally looked upon as a covenant of works, and the most part did so rely upon it, and expect life from it: for the apostle speaketh of the covenant made on Sinai, in this sense, while he saith, "it did gender unto bondage," to wit, as it was mistaken for a covenant of works; and how it is said in that sense to gender unto bondage, is cleared in the exposition; "The one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth unto bondage."

6. Hagar, Sarah's bondmaid, did fitly represent and prefigure the covenant of grace, as it was delivered upon mount Sinai, not only for the reasons contained in the text, but also because as Hagar was once a second wife to Abraham, and Ishmael her son for a while Abraham's presumed heir, Gen. xvii. 18; yet, after she began to contest with her mistress Sarah, (Gen. xvi. 4,) and her son to persecute Isaac the child of promise, both mother and son were cast out of Abraham's family, and deprived of all hope of any inheritance in the land of promise, Gen. xxi. 9, 10; so the law of Moses, or the covenant given by God upon mount Sinai, while it was rightly used as a pedagogue leading to Christ, it did bring forth children to God, heirs of the heavenly inheritance, such were all sincere believers under the Old Testament; but when it was abused, and set up as a covenant of works in opposition to the covenant of grace, it did then bring forth children unto bondage, and those who did so adhere unto it, were detained under damnable slavery, and cut off from Christ, Gal. v. 2; for the apostle, showing that this covenant was prefigured by Agar, doth hint at one reason which leadeth us to seek after more; "Which covenant," saith he, "is Agar: for Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia."

7. No church or people hath religion so firmly established, which in progress of time may not make such apostasy from it, as that there will be a vast difference betwixt what they once were, and what they now are: for such a church was Jerusalem once, Psa. lxxvi. 1, 2; but now her case was much altered; therefore, saith he, this covenant doth answer, or keepeth concord with Jerusalem, not which once was, but now is, (importing there was a foul change to the worse,) "And is in bondage with her children."

VER. 26. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The apostle having shown that Hagar did prefigure the first or old covenant, doth now briefly describe that second or new covenant which was prefigured in Sarah : first, by declaring where that covenant did reside, or who adhered to it, to wit, "Jerusalem which is above," whereby is not meant the church triumphant in heaven ; for it is clear he speaketh of a church, whereof believers upon earth are members, even the militant church, especially of the truly regenerate, claiming to life according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, although the catholic church-visible be not excluded, seeing it is a church begetting children to God by the use of ordinances, and is here called Jerusalem, because that city was a type of the true church, for her compactness and order, Psa. cxxii. 3 ; beauty, Psa. xlviii. 2 ; and divine protection which did attend her, Isa. xxxi. 5 ; and this church is said to be above, because her original is from heaven, James i. 17 ; and the lively members thereof have their conversation in heaven, Philip. iii. 20 ; secondly, by showing the state wherein those who adhere to this covenant are ; a state of freedom from sin, Rom. vi. 18, the curse of the law, Rom. viii. 1, and the yoke of that ancient legal dispensation, Ephes. ii. 15. Thirdly, by declaring who are the children of this covenant, or members of the true church adhering to this covenant, even all sincere believers, whether Jews or Gentiles.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord doth never so far give way to the spirit of error and rage of persecution, but even in the worst of times he hath some who do keep their garments clean, and hold up a banner for truth, notwithstanding of all contrary endeavours for the utter extirpation of it : for though Jerusalem, the usual place of God's abode, was at this time in bondage with her children, a very receptacle of Christ's enemies, Acts viii. 1, and chief head of all that opposition which was against the gospel, Acts ix. 2 ; yet, God wanted not a church, even "Jerusalem which is above."

2. As freedom from God's wrath and curse may be attained and enjoyed under bodily bondage and oppression : so, being attained, it maketh the attainer truly free, so that all his other bondage is not to be valued much : for the true church, though for the time heavily oppressed in her members, ver. 29, of whom some were also in a state of bodily servitude, Col. iii. 22 ; yet, because of her freedom from God's wrath and curse, she is said to be free, as if this bondage being removed there had been none remaining ; "Jerusalem which is above is free."

3. Though those who are regenerate, do owe their new birth to God their Father only, in so far as the virtue and power whereby they are brought from death to life is only his, Eph. i. 19 ; and neither church-ministry, nor any created power whatsoever, can by any proper efficiency reach this so divine and supernatural an effect ; yet the church is the mother of all the regenerate,

in so far as she is gifted with ministers (1 Cor. xii. 28) whose office is to dispense the word, which word being blessed of God, is both the seed of this new birth, 1 Peter i. 23, as also the food and milk (1 Peter ii. 2) whereby the new-born children are nourished : for in this sense the apostle saith, "Jerusalem is the mother of us all."

4. Though no church, no, not the church universal, which is most properly our mother, ought to be heard and obeyed, further than her commands do agree with the commands of God our Father, Acts iv. 19 ; yet we are still to give her respect and reverence, as also to employ our parts and graces, and all that is ours, for the defence and advancement of her just interest in our places and stations, and that because she "is the mother of us all."

VER. 27. For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not ; break forth and cry, *thou* that travailest not : for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

The apostle, in the fourth place, confirmeth the truth of the former mystery by a scripture taken out of Isa. liv. 1, where the prophet doth direct his speech to the Christian church under the gospel, as she was to be in her beginnings, and about the time of Christ's incarnation and sufferings, (whereof he had most clearly prophesied, chap. liii.) and having designed her by the name of a "barren woman that beareth not, and travaileth not," because of the paucity of converts to the Christian faith at that time ; and of a seemingly desolate woman without a husband, because of the cross and persecution which she was then to be under, he exhorteth her to rejoice, and to express her joy against all contrary discouragements ; and that because her state should be changed, and she made a more fruitful mother, by a numerous accession of converts to the Christian faith from among the Gentiles, than the Jewish synagogue herself, who formerly had enjoyed God's grace and presence, and at that time should seem to be more owned of God because of the great prosperity, multitude of followers, and outward beauty attending her beyond the Christian church.

DOCTRINES.

1. The supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, is the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture : for Paul in this present controversy appealeth to Scripture ; "For it is written," saith he.

2. It is not the church's lot to be always alike fruitful in bringing forth children to God ; she hath her barren times wherein the labours of Christ's ministers are attended with little success, and but very few are converted by their pains, and this even sometimes when outward means are such, as may be most promising of fruitfulness ; the Lord hereby inculcating this necessary lesson, that the great work of converting souls dependeth not upon most promising

means, 1 Cor. iii. 6; for the prophet, having an eye mainly (as we showed in the exposition) to the first beginnings of the Christian church, when Christ himself was a preacher, Rom. xv. 8, calleth her by the name of "barren that beareth not, that travaileth not."

3. The Lord will sometimes, for good and necessary reasons, (expressed chap. i. ver. 13. Doct. 6,) give his church and people so far over to the rage of persecutors, and own them as little under trouble to the view of the world, as if he had no interest in them as their lord and husband; for, in this respect, the apostle calleth the Christian church "desolate," that is, without an husband in appearance; "For the desolate," &c.

4. A false declining, yea, an apostate church may be, to outward appearance, much more owned of God, as to the multitude of followers, external beauty, outward prosperity and freedom from the cross, than the true church, so that none of those things are infallible marks of a true church; for the Jewish synagogue, because of those things, seemed to have an husband when the Christian church was desolate; "Than she that hath an husband."

5. The wise Lord hath thought it fit to make his church, and real believers in the church, liable, as to their outward condition mainly, to great variety and many changes, it being almost impossible that we who are of such changeable tempers ourselves, should bear any one condition right for any long time together, and not miscarry one way or other under it, Ps. lv. 19, for the church, for that time barren and desolate, was to have many children; "The desolate hath," or, as the words may also read, shall have "many children."

6. It is the duty of God's people to compose their affections, especially those of joy and sorrow, suitably to God's various way of dealing with them; for the church, before barren, and therefore sad, is to change her sorrow into joy upon God's changing his way of dealing with her; "Rejoice thou barren: for the desolate hath many more children."

7. The enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and gaining of many sinners to God, together with the weakening of Satan's interest in the world, ought to be entertained with much joy; for, saith he, "Rejoice, break forth and cry: for the desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband."

8. So many are the discouragements of the godly, and so many causes of grief, which are as heavy weights and strong bars to bear down and keep in their joy, that this duty of rejoicing is not easily come at, even when God in his gracious providence giveth reason for it. Hence the command is inculcated in several words, "Rejoice, cry, and break forth;" which last supposeth that many restraints from this duty are lying on, which must be broken through before the heart can attain to it.

VER. 28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

The apostle, in the last place, applieth this typical history, and the scriptural confirmation

of the mystery prefigured by it. And first, by asserting what himself really was, and what in charity he yet conceived many of them at least to be, he sheweth the only way of attaining the heavenly inheritance, as children, to be by virtue of the covenant promise, in resemblance of Isaac who was so begotten, ver. 23, and tacitly implieth that it is not attained by virtue of our own natural endeavours, or fleshly privileges, whereof the Jewish synagogue and her followers did boast, chap. vi. ver. 12, and wherein they were represented by the child of the bondwoman, Ishmael, ver. 23.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister ought to prosecute general doctrine so far, until it be brought home to the particular state and case of his hearers, by pertinent and close application, as that wherein the life and power of preaching doth mainly consist, 1 Tim. v. 20; for Paul resteth not until he make application of the doctrine in hand, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was," &c.

2. The humours of people are sometimes so ticklish, that a minister hath need to proceed to the work of applying general truths unto them with that wariness and circumspection, as to point out their duty, and what he would have them be, rather by showing his charitable thoughts of them that they are so already, than by any direct up-stirring of them to it; for so doth Paul here point at their duty of quitting confidence in the flesh, and of betaking themselves to faith in the promise, by showing he did in charity judge of them as those who had done so already; "Now we, brethren, are children of the promise."

3. That any of Adam's lost seed, who are by nature children of wrath, do become the children of God and heirs of eternal life, is only by virtue of the gracious promises of the covenant of grace, in so far as, first, they are begotten into a new and spiritual life, not from any principle of natural strength and vigour, Rom. ix. 16, but by the force of those promises, enlivened by the Spirit of God, 2 Cor. x. 4. And secondly, their right to heaven ariseth, not from any works which they do, Tit. iii. 5, but from faith in the promise, John iii. 16; for in this sense we are called "children of the promise."

VER. 29. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

He applieth the present purpose, in the second place, for consolation to the true members of the Christian church, against those persecutions which they sustained from the false apostles, and such others as adhered to the Jewish synagogue, and to the doctrine of justification by works, first, by showing that the like persecution did befall Isaac, and was prefigured by those bitter mockings which Isaac, who was begotten by the power of God's Spirit, according to the tenor of the promise, did suffer from Ishmael, who was begotten by the ordinary strength of nature, and boasted in his carnal outward privi-

leges, Gen. xxi. 9; "As it was then, so it is now," saith he.

DOCTRINES.

1. It hath been, and yet is the ordinary lot of God's children, to suffer hard things from the men of this world, the Lord having seen it most fitting, that by the cross they come to their crown, and through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22; for Paul speaketh of persecutions as a thing common to the church in all ages; "But as then, even so it is now," saith he.

2. The sorest persecutions and troubles which the godly endure, do frequently come from those who are otherwise tied unto them by most strict and nearest relations of kindred, acquaintance, or such like; this being Satan's aim herein, that their sufferings may have so much the more of bitter gall and wormwood in them, as they are inflicted by such from whom better things in reason might have been expected, Psa. lv. 12, 13; for Isaac is persecuted by his brother Ishmael; "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him who was born after the Spirit."

3. Amongst those other persecutions which the godly must endure, the scourge of tongues is one, and not the least, especially when godless men, taking occasion from their low condition, do mock at their interest in God, and labour to shame them from their confidence, as if the promise of God were of none effect; for Ishmael's mocking of Isaac, being yet a child, spoken of Gen. xxi. 9, (wherewith was doubtless joined his mocking of the promise made to Isaac,) is here called persecution; "He that was born after the flesh persecuted," &c.

4. Whatever wicked men may pretend, yet the true rise of all their malice and opposition to those who are truly godly, is their inward antipathy to the work of grace in the godly, which they themselves want; for so much is hinted at by the description here given of Ishmael the persecutor, "he was born after the flesh," he had no more than what the power of nature did carry him to; and of persecuted Isaac, "he was born after the Spirit," or by the power of the Spirit of God, whereby he did prefigure those who are truly regenerate, which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13.

5. This may furnish with no small encouragement and comfort under hardest sufferings, that nothing befalleth us but what is common to men, and hath been the church's ordinary lot in former ages; for this is Paul's scope, even to comfort Christians under their present sufferings, because Isaac did endure persecution as well as they; "But as then, even so it is now," saith he.

VER. 30. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

He comforteth them, secondly, from this, that the Jewish synagogue, and those who adhered

thereto, prefigured by Hagar and Ishmael, should be cast out of the church of God from the society of the saints, and from the inheritance of life everlasting, according as was shadowed forth by the like sentence of ejection from Abraham's family past upon Hagar and Ishmael, at first by Sarah, Gen. xxi. 10, and authorised afterwards by God himself, Gen. xxi. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. The child of God can have no solid comfort against, nor yet be sufficiently guarded from stumbling at the outwardly prosperous state of the wicked, or the afflicted state of the godly, until he consider what is God's mind revealed in Scripture either of the one or the other; for the apostle, to comfort them against the wicked their prosperity and persecution flowing from it, doth lead them to God's mind in Scripture; "Nevertheless," saith he, "what saith the Scripture?"

2. Though God be slow to anger, and is not easily provoked wholly to dissolve and cast off a church and people who were once named by his name, even when they turn persecuting apostates; yet if they be not gained by his long-suffering patience, but notwithstanding go on to persecute truth, and to maintain their damnable heresies, he will quit them at the last, by suffering them to make total apostasy from him; for the Jewish synagogue, though persecuting truth, and maintaining justification by works, and several other errors, was not yet cast off by God, but was to be rejected shortly after this, as is not obscurely hinted at by the apostle while he citeth this scripture, leaving the application of it unto themselves; "Cast out the bondwoman and her son," &c.

3. As it is no small disadvantage to truth, and to those who do maintain it, when their persecuting adversaries do lurk under the mask of God's true church, and are generally taken for such; so it is no less comfort when God taketh off that mask, and maketh it appear unto the world, that they are not the church of God, but the synagogue of Satan; for the apostle's scope is to comfort the Christian church, that the Jewish synagogue, who for the time gave out herself and was generally taken for the true church, and thereby procured no small authority to her erroneous doctrine and way, should shortly be cast out, and not have so much as the face of a church; "What saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman."

4. There is no salvation, nor any hope of salvation, unto any who are without the true church; for the Jewish synagogue being once unchurched, her children, and those who adhered in all things to her, were debarred from the heavenly inheritance, as Hagar and Ishmael once being cast out of Abraham's family, Ishmael was thereby debarred from having any part in the promised land; "Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir," &c.

5. The doctrine of justification by works, when it is not only doctrinally maintained, but also practically walked in, doth exclude the maintainer of it from having any part in the kingdom of heaven; for so much was prefigured by the

son of the bondwoman, against whom a sentence is passed, that "he shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

VER. 31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

He comforteth them, thirdly, from this, that they who for the time were persecuted by the Jewish synagogue, were not children of the bondwoman, or members of that company and society which was prefigured by Hagar, and so in no hazard from the former terrible sentence, but being children of the free woman, or members of that church which was prefigured by Sarah, they had right to the heavenly inheritance; whereby, as by all which he hath formerly said, he doth indirectly exhort those Galatians to quit their present error of seeking after justification by works, and their tenacious adherence to that ancient pedagogue of Moses, as they would not exclude themselves from the heavenly inheritance.

DOCTRINES.

1. As a minister must sometimes denounce most terrible judgments against the obstinate and godless, so he ought most carefully to guard such denunciations as those, lest they to whom they do not appertain make application of them, and be discouraged by them; for Paul doth guard the former denunciation, while he saith, "So then, we are not children of the bondwoman."

2. The heavy denunciation of fearful judgments to come upon any, are speaking warnings unto us to flee from that way wherein those have walked who are so threatened; for having shown that the bondwoman, with her son, were to be cast out, he inferreth, "So then we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free," which hath the force of an indirect exhortation to quit all relation unto the bondwoman, as they would escape the threatened judgment.

CHAPTER V.

In the first part of this chapter, he exhorteth them to persist in their Christian liberty, from the bondage of the Mosaical yoke, and chiefly, that they would not seek after justification by these ceremonial observances. In order to which, the observation of the ceremonial law was mainly urged by the false apostles, Acts xv.

2. Which exhortation he presseth, 1. Directly; because, first, Christ had purchased that liberty, ver. 1. Secondly, circumcision did deprive the person circumcised of all benefit by Christ, ver. 2. Thirdly, it engaged him to keep the whole law, and so made his salvation impossible, ver. 3. Fourthly, seeking after justification by these observances, was a renouncing of Christ, ver. 4. Fifthly, Paul, and other converted Jews, sought not to be justified by these, but by faith, ver. 5. Sixthly, the command enjoining circumcision, had now ceased, ver. 6. Next, he presseth the

exhortation indirectly, first, by reproving them for their defection, ver. 7, and by obviating two objections, ver. 8, 9. Secondly, by professing his hope of their recovery, ver. 10. Thirdly, by refuting a calumny spread of himself, as if he had preached circumcision, ver. 11. Fourthly, by wishing the prime seducers were cut off, ver. 12.

In the second part of the chapter, he exhorteth them to use their liberty aright; for which he giveth two rules, 1. They would not give licence to their fleshly corruptions. 2. They would serve one another by love, ver. 13. The latter of which he enforceth, because first, love is the compend of all duty, ver. 14. Secondly, dangerous effects would follow upon the want of it, ver. 15, and prescribeth an help for reducing the first rule in practice, to wit, walking in the Spirit, ver. 16—18. And having cleared what it is to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, ver. 19—21, and what to walk in the Spirit, from the respective effects of both flesh and spirit, ver. 22, 23, he useth one argument against fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; because they were engaged to crucify them, ver. 24, and another, for walking in the Spirit, because they all pretended at least to regeneration, and the first principles of a spiritual life, ver. 25, and concludeth with a deboration from ambition, provoking and envying one another, ver. 26.

VER. 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The apostle first exhorteth them stedfastly, constantly, and against all contrary opposition, to maintain both in judgment and practice the former doctrine of the church's freedom, especially from the Levitical ceremonies. Secondly, he dehortheth them from coming under that intolerable bondage, which did attend the making conscience of those ceremonial observances, Acts xv. 10, and had some resemblance with that bondage of idolatry, under which they formerly were, with relation to which he saith, "be not again entangled." See chap. iv. ver. 9. Thirdly, he enforceth the exhortation more directly by six arguments, the first whereof, which is in this verse, is, because Christ had purchased this freedom to the church by his blood.

DOCTRINES.

1. Then only is it seasonable to labour upon the affections of an erring people by exhortation and reproof, when sufficient pains have been first taken to inform their judgments, and by strength of reason to convince them of their error: otherwise exhortations, persuasions, and reproofs will prove but poor and weak arguments: for Paul useth this method here, while having formerly gone about by Scripture and reason to convince them of their error, he doth now exhort them; "Stand fast therefore," &c.

2. Every man by nature is a bondslave, as being under the bondage of sin, Rom. vi. 17; Satan, Eph. i. 2; the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 10. The Jews moreover were under bondage to the

ceremonial law, the observing whereof was a bondage because of the great trouble, pain in the flesh, and expense which did attend the observation of it; and therefore it especially is meant by the yoke of bondage in this place; see Acts xv. 10; for while he saith, "Christ hath made us free," he supposeth a foregoing bondage.

3. Jesus Christ, by his obedience and death, chap. iv. 4, 5, hath purchased freedom and liberty unto his church; a liberty not to do evil, Rom. vi. 1, nor from the yoke of new obedience, Matt. xi. 29, nor from the cross, Mark viii. 34, nor yet from that obedience and reverence which inferiors owe to superiors, Col. iii. 22, Rom. xiii. 1; but from the dominion of sin, Rom. vi. 14, the tyranny of Satan, 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26, the curse, Gal. iii. 13, and irritating power of the law, Rom. vii. 5, 6, from observing the ceremonial law of Moses, Col. ii. 14, and much more from subjecting our consciences to the rites, doctrines, ceremonies, and laws of men in the matter of worship, Col. ii. 20, for saith he, "Christ hath made us free."

4. The consideration of the worth and price which Christ hath put upon our freedom and liberty in all the fore-mentioned particulars, even such as he hath given himself for the purchase of it, ought to endear it unto us so much, as that contrary to all opposition, and to the utmost of our power and abilities, and upon all hazard whatsoever, we may with courage and constancy, in our places and stations, stand to the defence of it: for so much doth the apostle enjoin, saying, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty, and that because Christ hath made us free."

5. Though civil liberty and freedom from bodily bondage be so much desired, that even before we be called to it we are ready to break all bonds and aspire to be at it, Jude ver. 8; yet, so ignorant are we of that worth, which is in spiritual liberty and freedom from spiritual bondage, that hardly can we be excited to seek after it, or made to stand to it when it is attained, but are in daily hazard to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt, preferring our former bondage to our present liberty. Hence the apostle findeth it necessary to inculcate this duty so much of "standing to the liberty," and of "not being entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

6. Multiplicity of external rites and significant ceremonies in the matter of worship, is not only a burden and yoke to the conscience, hard to be borne, but also an entangling and ensnaring yoke, especially when folk do place all their religion in these, so that when once the conscience hath stooped to take on this yoke, hardly can it again be shaken off; the truth whereof doth hold in rites and ceremonies, which are even appointed of God, but much more in those, which are appointed only by men: for the apostle calleth the ceremonial law a yoke, and such as would entangle them; "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage;" he alludeth to oxen whose necks are tied to the yoke with cords, or somewhat else, that they may not shake it off.

ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

He addeth a second argument to enforce the exhortation, wherein, having opposed his own apostolic authority for confirming the truth of what he is to say against all who would contradict it, he affirmeth that the observing of any one ceremony, and especially of circumcision, (to wit, as of a thing which ought of necessity to be done, and as a part of a man's righteousness necessary to salvation, in which sense it was pressed by the false apostles, Acts xv. 2,) did cut off the observer from all benefit by Jesus Christ. The reasons of which sentence are, first, the holding up of circumcision, and by consequence the whole bulk of that Mosaic dispensation, did say in effect that Christ was not yet come, seeing all those were to be done away at his coming, Heb. ix. 10. Secondly, Christ must either be our whole righteousness and complete Saviour, or not at all, Acts iv. 12, Isa. xlii. 8. So that by joining circumcision with Christ, as a necessary part of their righteousness, and a cause of salvation. Christ did cease from being a Saviour to them at all.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister of Jesus Christ ought not to satisfy himself in this, that what he speaketh is pertinent and apposite to the present purpose, but would also endeavour, that those to whom he speaketh may with attention and faith receive it off his hand; in order to which it is not inconvenient that all along his discourse, he labour to quicken their attention by speaking somewhat for that very end, especially when he is to utter any truth of singular concernment, or from receiving whereof he apprehendeth the hearers may be somewhat averse: for such a truth is here delivered by Paul, and therefore he prefixes a note of attention to it; "Behold," saith he.

2. A minister ought to be so confident of the truth of his doctrine, and of his own authority from Christ to deliver it, that although his doctrine be contradicted, and his authority undervalued, he may yet with boldness assert both the one and the other: for though Paul's apostolic authority was questioned, see upon chap. i. ver. 12, and the truth which he here holdeth forth much contradicted, Acts xv. 2; yet he opposeth his own authority for the confirmation of this truth against all who would oppose it; "Behold, I Paul say unto you, if ye be circumcised."

3. That Paul, in this dispute, excludeth from justification, not only works flowing from the strength of man's free-will, without grace, but also those which flow from a gracious root wrought in the heart by Christ, appeareth from this, that those against whom he disputeth professed faith in Christ, (and so could not maintain that the works of a natural man, destitute of Christ, did justify,) otherwise, this had been no cogent argument to refute their opinion, that "if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing."

4. Many do profess Christ who shall receive no saving advantage by him, especially they who rely upon any thing besides him, or jointly with

VER. 2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if

him, as the meritorious cause of their salvation: for saith he, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

VER. 3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Here is a third argument, to which also Paul premiteth his apostolical authority, seriously affirming, and by a public profession confirming, (for so the word rendered testify doth signify) that whosoever now (Christ the substance being come) did observe circumcision, (to wit, in the way wherein it was urged by the false apostles, Acts xv. 2,) he was thereby engaged to keep the whole law, and this the whole ceremonial and judicial law, (circumcision being the initiatory sacrament engaging the receiver to the whole Mosaical pedagogy. Exod. xii. 48,) and the whole moral law, and that under the hazard of condemnation. The reason whereof is, that no less than universal and perfect obedience to the law in all its precepts is required unto this, that a man be justified by works, Gal. iii. 10.

DOCTRINES.

1. Of how much the nearer concernment unto the salvation of hearers any truth is, the minister of Christ ought so much the more to insist upon it, and with so much the greater seriousness and fervency to inculcate and press it, as a matter of life and death; that people may know he believeth, and therefore speaketh, and consequently may be the more moved with what he speaketh: for Paul speaking of a truth, the not receiving whereof would have condemned those Galatians, he doth with much vehemency insist upon the pressing of it; "I testify again," saith he, "to every man that is circumcised."

2. Because it is a matter of no small difficulty to get those reclaimed who are engaged in an evil course, Jer. xiii. 23; therefore frequent testimonies would be given by Christ's ministers against them in it; that hereby the guilty party may have the less of ease and peace in their way, and thereby, through God's blessing upon his own mean, be made to quit it, 2 Tim. ii. 25. And at least, the Lord's servants may be the more exonerated, Ezek. iii. 19; and others of the Lord's people preserved from being infected with that sin, which they do so much and so frequently testify against, 1 Tim. v. 20; for in order to those ends, Paul (having once, and oftener, both in this epistle, and by his preaching, doubtless, while he was with those Galatians, testified against this dangerous error of theirs) doth here give further testimony against it, while he saith, "For I testify again to every man."

3. It is wholly impossible for any mere man to keep the law of God perfectly in this life, and to obtain salvation by so doing; Paul taketh this for granted, otherwise this argument, that circumcision did engage them to keep the whole law under hazard of condemnation, had not been cogent; "He is a debtor to do the whole law."

4. Though believers in Jesus Christ be not delivered from their obligation to the least duty

which is required by any precept of the moral law, Matt. v. 19; yet they are not under that exact rigour and condemning power of the law, whereby eternal wrath is denounced against the sinner for the meanest breach of the law, Deut. xxvii. 26: for while he speaketh of their being "debtors to do the whole law," as a sad terrifying consequence of their being circumcised, it must be understood not simply of their obligation to obedience, but of an obligation under the penalty of the law's curse; and hereby it is imported that sincere believers are not under this obligation, else the argument were of no force.

VER. 4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Followeth a fourth argument, to wit, whosoever did observe the Levitical ceremonies as they were pressed by the false apostles, or sought to be justified by their observing of them; they by so doing had renounced Christ, and all benefit to be had by him, (for the word rendered "Christ is become of no effect to you," signifieth, ye are made void of, and separated from Christ,) and had fallen from the way and doctrine of free grace: for grace here seemeth to be taken for the doctrine of grace, as Tit. ii. 11. The reason of the consequence is, that grace and works are not consistent in the justification of a sinner; if the one have any hand in it, the other hath none, Rom. xi. 6.

DOCTRINES.

1. Those sad consequences mentioned here, and in the preceding verses, do not strike against the observing of circumcision simply, and at all times and cases, (for even at this very time the observance thereof was tolerated to the weak Jews, Rom. xiv. 6, and to some of the stronger sort also, as of a thing at that time indifferent to them, for eschewing the offence of the weak, Acts xvi. 3,) but as it was pressed by the false apostles, even as the cause of a man's justification before God; for to be "circumcised," and "to be justified by the law," are equivalent phrases in the apostle's meaning, as is clear from ver. 2, 3, compared with this, "Whosoever of you are justified," or "seek to be justified by the law."

2. To make apostasy from Christ, and the gospel once received, is of more dreadful consequence than the not receiving of him, or not reaping any profit by him at all; for having spoken, ver. 2, of their receiving no advantage by Christ, as one bad consequence of their being circumcised, which was common to them with those who never professed the name of Christ, he doth here mention their apostasy from Christ and grace, as another bad consequence, which he reserveth to the last place, as being more formidable than any of the former. Ye are become separate from Christ, "ye are fallen from grace."

3. The apostle's consequence, whereby he inferreth that they who seek justification by works are fallen from grace, doth no ways prove that the truly regenerate can really or totally fall from God's grace and favour; for by grace is meant

the doctrine of grace. Besides, their falling from grace is only conditional, and suspended upon their seeking justification by works, in which damnable error the truly regenerate cannot finally, at least, persist, Matt. xxiv. 24, although for a time they may be overtaken with it: "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace."

VER. 5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

He addeth a fifth reason, to wit, that Paul himself, and other Jews who before their conversion to the Christian faith were circumcised, being now converted and taught by the Holy Ghost, did renounce all confidence in their own works or carnal privileges, whether circumcision or any other, and did look for heaven (called here "hope," because it is the object of our hope, as Tit. ii. 13,) only by virtue of that righteousness of Jesus Christ which is laid hold upon by faith.

DOCTRINES.

1. The riches of a believer are not so much in possession as in expectation and hope: "We wait for the hope," or, for heaven hoped for.

2. None have right to heaven here, or shall enjoy it after this, who are wholly unrighteous and destitute of all righteousness; for it is called, "the hope of righteousness," as being attained unto by the righteous only, and by virtue of their righteousness.

3. No personal righteousness of our own doth entitle us to this blessed hope and heavenly inheritance, Tit. iii. 5, but only the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, Rom. v. 19, and apprehended by faith, which therefore is called here, "Righteousness through faith."

4. It is only the inward efficacious teaching of God's Spirit, which can sufficiently instruct us in the knowledge of this imputed righteousness by faith, and make us with security and confidence venture our eternal well-being and hope of heaven upon it; for, saith he, "We through the Spirit," or being taught by the Spirit of God, "do wait for the hope of righteousness."

5. The experience and example of other exercised gracious Christians, ought to be of great weight to incline our judgment and affections towards an assenting unto and embracing of those truths from which they have drawn spiritual consolation; for Paul doth reason, that they ought to receive the doctrine of justification by faith, because he himself, and other believing Jews, did venture their salvation in that bottom; "For we wait for the hope of righteousness through faith."

6. The example of none, though of never so much reputation in the church, is to be followed as an absolute rule, but in so far only as their practice is approved by the Spirit of God speaking in Scripture, Isa. viii. 20; for Paul, to make his example a sufficient rule for them to follow, sheweth he did nothing but as he was taught by the Spirit of God; "For we through the Spirit wait," saith he.

VER. 6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumci-

cision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Here is his sixth reason, which militates not only against the observing of circumcision, and those other Levitical ceremonies, as a part of a man's righteousness before God, but also against the necessity of observing them at all; because in Jesus Christ, or in the state of the church under the gospel after Christ was manifested in the flesh, neither the observing of these things, nor the neglect of them, did commend a man to God, as acceptable service to him, the service which he now requireth being only a true lively faith, evidencing itself to be such by the fruits of a new life, comprehended under the love of God and our neighbour, Rom. xiii. 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though circumcision and the rest of those Levitical ceremonies were once enjoined, and accordingly to be practised as a necessary part of worship, Gen. xvii. 10, 11, so that the performance of them in the way required was service acceptable to God, Gen. viii. 20, 21, and the neglect and contempt of them was in a high measure detestable, Exod. xii. 19; yet Christ being come in the flesh, who was the substance of all those shadows, Col. ii. 17, the command whereby they were enjoined did cease, they remaining for a season chiefly to the Jews, and some of them also to the Gentiles, Acts xv. 29, in their own nature indifferent, so that the using or not using of them (except in the case of eschewing scandal, Rom. xiv. 21, and of bearing testimony to the doctrine of Christian liberty, Gal. ii. 3, 4,) did neither commend a man, nor make him guilty before God; for saith he, "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision."

2. To impose the tie of a command upon any thing as a necessary part of divine worship, wherein the word has left us free, or to subject ourselves to any such command, is a receding from and a betraying of that liberty which is purchased unto us by Christ; for he maketh their receiving of circumcision as a necessary part of worship, a receding from this liberty; because now, in the days of the gospel, there is no command from God to be circumcised; "For in Jesus Christ," saith he, "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision."

3. The ceremonial law being abolished under the New Testament, Christians are not left destitute of work, and idle; for though "in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision," yet "faith, which worketh by love, availeth."

4. The sum of a Christian man's task now under the gospel, is the exercise of faith, which is the great command of the gospel, 1 John iii. 23, and of love, or new obedience; for love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 10; neither is the use of the sacraments and of other pieces of commanded worship hereby excluded; for they are helps of our faith, Rom. iv. 11, and a part of those duties of love which we owe to God, as being enjoined by the second command; for, saith he, "in Jesus Christ availeth faith that worketh by love."

5. Though faith only doth justify, there being no other grace which concurrereth with it in this work, Gal. ii. 16; yet faith is not alone in the heart, no, not when it doth justify, but is always accompanied with the grace of love to God and our neighbour; for "in Christ Jesus no faith availeth any thing," or will be owned by him as true and saving, but that "which worketh by love."

6. Though faith and love be always conjoined; yet faith, in order of nature at least, hath the precedence; it being impossible that we can discharge any duty of love to God or our neighbour, sincerely or acceptably, before we close with Christ for the acceptance of our persons by faith, Heb. xi. 6, and thereby draw covenanted furniture from Christ for through-bearing in our duty, 1 Tim. i. 5; for saith he, "faith worketh by love," or is efficacious, and putteth forth its efficacy in love, as the fruit thereof.

VER. 7. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

He further presseth the former exhortation indirectly by four arguments, first, by commending them for their former forwardness in the embracing of this now controverted truth, (which he calleth their running well, or, with a sort of beauty and comeliness; for so much doth the word signify,) and sheweth no satisfying reason could be given for their present defection from it, and from walking according to it.

DOCTRINES.

1. A Christian life is like to a course or race from earth to heaven, by the way of holiness and all commanded duties, especially the exercise of faith and love; and therefore we ought to carry ourselves in this way, as those who run in a race, see Phil. iii. 13. Doct. 4, for the apostle setteth forth their progress in Christianity by a metaphor taken from runners in a race; "Ye did run well."

2. It is very ordinary for new converts to be carried on with a greater measure of affection and zeal, and to make swifter progress in this Christian course than others, or they themselves afterwards, when they are of older standing; the newness of the thing, the first edge which is upon their affections, not yet blunted by change of cases and multiplicity of duties, and God's restraining for a time the violent assault of multiplied furious temptations, until they be a little confirmed and engaged in his way, together with his affording a more plentiful measure of his sensible presence at first than afterwards, do all contribute hereto: for those Galatians at, and for a season after, their first conversion, "did run," and "run well."

3. As those who once made good progress in the ways of God may afterwards sit up, their aftercarriage proving no ways answerable to their promising beginnings; so, when it falleth thus out, it is matter of a sad regret unto beholders, and of a deserved reproof unto the persons themselves; for thus was it with those Galatians, whose defection is matter of astonishment to Paul, and of a sad rebuke to them: "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?"

4. No satisfying reason can be given, for which any, who once did enter the way of truth and holiness, should alter his course, take up an halt, or make defection from it, and thereby cause the ways of God to be evil spoken of, 2 Pet. ii. 2; for Paul's question, "Who did hinder you?" importeth that none in reason could have hindered them.

5. When people fall remiss and lazy in giving obedience to known truth, they are upon the very brink and precipice of defection unto contrary error, and of apostasy from the very profession of truth: for therefore the apostle doth challenge them for "not obeying the truth," though their apostasy from truth be mainly intended, implying that not obedience to truth, and apostasy from it, are near of kin each to other.

6. The serious consideration of a man's former forwardness in the ways of God, and how little reason can be given for his present backsliding and remissness, is a strong incitement to do the first works, and by future diligence to regain what he hath lost by his former negligence; for the apostle's scope is to incite towards a recovery of their lost liberty, by the consideration of those two, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?"

VER. 8. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

He preoccupieeth an objection; for, lest haply they had said, they were fully persuaded in their conscience, that the way wherein they now were, was approved of God; he repeneth [affirms] that whatever persuasion they might have of that kind, it was but a mere delusion, as not coming from God, who had called them to Christian liberty, ver. 13, but from the devil and his emissaries.

DOCTRINES.

1. The greatest untruths and foulest errors may be attended, in those who vent them, with no small measure of confidence and persuasion that they are undoubted truths: for Paul doth here speak against such a persuasion in those Galatians; "This persuasion cometh not of him," saith he.

2. There is much persuasion and confidence whereof God is not the author, and especially that which taketh darkness for light, and error for truth: this persuasion is not of God, or real, but a strong delusion, arising from arrogance and self-conceit in the person erring, 2 Tim. iii. 2, 4, compared with ver. 6, together with his strong engagements from credit, profit, or some other lust, to follow that error, which do blind the understanding, 2 Tim. iv. 3, but especially from the powerful working of Satan, who blindeth the minds of those who believe not the truth, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, for, saith he, "This persuasion cometh not of God."

3. Whatever persuasion cometh not of God, and is not grounded upon the word of truth, is not to be valued, but looked upon as a delusion, with how much soever confidence it be vented: for Paul regardeth not their persuasion upon this ground: "It is not of him that calleth you," saith he.

4. This may evidence persuasion or confidence,

not to be of God, or real, but a mere delusion, when that thing, the truth or lawfulness whereof we seem to be persuaded of, is contrary unto that which we are called unto of God, by virtue either of our general or particular calling: for the description here given of God from his calling of them importeth, their opinion was contrary to that Christian liberty to which they were called of God; and therefore persuasion about it was not to be regarded: "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you," saith he.

VER. 9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

He obviateth a second objection; for if they should have said, there was no reason why Paul should make so much noise, seeing they had not embraced the whole Jewish religion, but did only observe some ceremonies thereof, and nevertheless remained constant in the Christian faith; yea, and possibly, that even this much was not common to them all, but the deed of some few only; he answereth by a similitude taken from leaven, that a little false doctrine (to which leaven is compared, Matt. xvi. 12,) may easily, in progress of time, corrupt a man's judgment in every other point of doctrine, and that a small number of scandalous or seduced persons (to whom leaven is compared, 1 Cor. v. 6) may very speedily infect the whole church.

DOCTRINES.

1. When they who are overtaken with sin and error, cannot any longer hold off conviction, or defend their practice by strength of reason, it is ordinary for them to mince and extenuate the sin of which they are convinced, and to make but small matters of greatest offences: for the similitude here used supposeth there was an aptness in them thus to extenuate their error. "A little leaven," saith he.

2. It is the duty of Christ's ministers, not only by force of reason to endeavour a sinner's conviction, that his way is sinful or erroneous, but also to forecast those shifts, whereby the sinner being convinced of his sin or error, may readily go about to extenuate it; and having found them out, to show the vanity and lightness of them: for the apostle doth forecast that readily they would extenuate their sin from this, that it was but a little one, and maketh their extenuation to be without ground, showing "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

3. The church of Christ, and every particular member thereof, ought carefully to resist and watch against the very first beginnings and occasions of sin, but especially of error: the church by labouring authoritatively to convince the gain-sayers, Tit. i. 9, and by timely and prudent application of church censures, in case of incorrigible obstinacy, Tit. iii. 10; and every particular Christian by labouring to be established and fixed in the truth, Col. ii. 7, lest he be carried about with every wind of doctrine, Eph. iv. 14, and by avoiding all unnecessary commerce and fellowship with those who are carried away with a spirit of error, 2 John 10, for the least of errors, and the smallest number of seduced persons, are here

compared to leaven, a little quantity whereof doth secretly insinuate itself, and insensibly convey its sourness unto the whole mass or lump.

VER. 10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

He doth indirectly press the former exhortation, secondly, by showing his confidence, grounded upon charity, 1 Cor. xiii., that through the Lord's gracious working with them, they should be reclaimed from their error, and made yet again to embrace the same truth, which he did preach; but withal, lest from this his charity to them, they should conclude the error wherein they were was not very dangerous; therefore he sheweth his just indignation against it, by denouncing deserved wrath and judgment to be inflicted, partly, in this life, partly, in eternal death, against their prime seducers, without any exception, save that of repentance, which is to be understood in all threatenings, Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. A loving minister, and zealous for the good of souls, when he hath to do with those who are overtaken in a fault, will of necessity be tossed with the tides of contrary affections, and, as it were, divided betwixt the exercise of hopes and fears: love in Paul, did stir up both those affections, by making him fear the worst of those Galatians in the preceding verses, and yet hope the best of them here; "I have confidence in you through the Lord," saith he.

2. The minister of Jesus Christ is not to despair of their recovery who do oppose themselves; but ought in charity to hope the best of all men, so long as they are curable: "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded," saith he, which was not a confidence of faith grounded upon a word of promise, and therefore infallible; but a confidence of charity and love to their good, which made him hope, that God would bring about their deliverance, wherein, though the event should have disappointed him, yet he had not transgressed, seeing that in our judgment of persons, where things are doubtful, we are commanded to hope the best so far as may be, 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

3. It is convenient also that a minister sometimes make known unto the people that charitable confidence which he hath of their recovery, the knowledge whereof may not only furnish the people themselves with some heart and courage to set upon their duty, arising from their minister's hopes and confidence, but also commend their duty and make it lovely to them, as being pressed upon them by one, who hath evidenced his love and charity toward them by that his confidence. Besides, it is looked upon as a thing disgraceful, to disappoint those, who from love to, and desire after our good, do hope the best of us: thus Paul maketh them know his confident hope of their recovery; "I have confidence that you will be none otherwise minded," saith he.

4. As the sinner's first conversion from sin to holiness is God's work, Eph. ii. 5, so the recovery of a sinner from his backsliding and defection, is no less a work of infinite power, Ps. li. 10, and the only work of God; for the apostle, speaking of his confidence of their recovery, doth rely not upon their strength, but on the Lord for bringing about the thing hoped for; "I have confidence in you through the Lord," saith he.

5. A minister would so make known to people his charitable confidence of their recovery from sin and error, as he may not thereby give them ground to conceive that he is not much displeased with their sin, and so render them secure under it, as making a sleeping pillow of those his hopes; for the apostle, having shown his charitable confidence towards the seduced people, doth evidence how dangerous their error was, notwithstanding, by denouncing God's judgment against their prime seducers; "But he that troubleth you, shall bear his judgment," saith he.

6. Make the native and ordinary effect of error is to trouble the church's peace, see chap. i. ver. 7, Doct. 3. "But he that troubleth you."

7. Though there were not a Christian magistrate to inflict civil punishment upon seducers, and those, who by drawing disciples after them do trouble the church's peace; or, though the Christian magistrate do not make conscience of that, which is his duty herein, Rom. xiii. 4, yet, such evil doers as those may certainly expect their deserved judgment from God, either here, or hereafter to be inflicted, either immediately by himself, Zech. xi. 7, or mediately by some one instrument or other, Zech. xiii. 3; for though there was now no Christian magistrate to punish such, yet Paul with much confidence affirmeth, "He that troubleth you, shall bear his judgment."

8. So just is God, that when he maketh inquisition for blood in his day of vengeance, he will suffer no impenitent transgressor, how subtle soever, escape his most accurate search, nor yet pass free from the dint of his avenging stroke, whoever he be for parts, power, or estimation: for he speaketh in the singular number, "he that troubleth you," to show, that every one, and, as it were, apart, and one by one, should be taken notice of, and "shall bear his judgment, whoever he be," that is, without exception of persons.

VER. 11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

He presseth the exhortation, thirdly, by refuting a calumny, whereby, as it seemeth, his adversaries would have made people believe, that Paul, by circumcising Timothy, to prevent the stumbling of the weak Jews, Acts xvi. 3, had declared himself to be of the same judgment with them in the present controversy. And he answereth, denying that he did urge circumcision to be observed by the Gentiles at all, Acts xxi. 25, nor yet by the Jews in the sense of his adversaries, and giveth two evidences of the truth of his denial; first, if he had preached circumcision, the Jews would not have persecuted him, as they constantly did. Secondly, they would not have

taken offence at the preaching of the gospel, or of salvation through Christ crucified, which is here called the cross, or doctrine of the cross, as 1 Cor. i. 18. The truth of both which consequences lieth in this, that the great reason why the Jews did persecute the apostle, and were such enemies to his doctrine, was his preaching down of circumcision, and the whole frame of that ancient legal administration, under which they were born and educated, Acts xxi. 28.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the ordinary lot of faithful ministers, to be subject unto slander and reproaches, not only in respect of their lives, Rom. iii. 8, but also in respect of their ministry and doctrine, as if they were heretics: for even Paul is reported of as a preacher of circumcision, which is supposed, while he saith, "If I yet preach circumcision."

2. So active are heretical seducers, as they leave no mean unessayed which may serve to confirm and establish their seduced followers, if it were even to spread reports of their chiefest opposites, that they are secretly and underhand of the same opinion with themselves, and that sometimes they declare their judgments to that purpose: for so did they report of Paul, as is here supposed: "If I yet preach circumcision."

3. The faithful minister of Jesus Christ, though he be maliciously and basely reported of, ought not to render evil for evil unto those who have invented or entertained such reports, but to return love for their hatred, and good for their evil, labouring more to vindicate himself, than to rub disgrace upon them, whereby he shall heap coals of fire upon their head, Rom. xii. 20; for so doth Paul, while he laboureth only to clear himself to those Galatians, among whom he was misreported of, giving them the affectionate style of brethren; "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?"

4. While we labour to clear ourselves from false imputations or calumnies, we had need to use much circumspection in declaring the matter of fact, lest we fail in any one circumstance, and so be found liars, while we go about to justify ourselves; for Paul is thus circumspect while he denieth not that he did circumcise any (for he circumcised Timothy, Acts xvi. 3,) or that he did ever preach circumcision (for he did so while he was a Pharisee, Gal. i. 13, 14,) but that he did preach the observing of it now as a thing necessary to salvation; "If I yet preach circumcision," saith he.

5. A faithful minister neither ought, nor will conceal any part of necessary truth, which he is otherwise called to preach, though he certainly know, he will incur hazard, loss, and persecution from men because of it: for Paul knew he was persecuted by the Jews for his preaching against circumcision, and yet he preacheth; "Why do I yet suffer persecution?"

6. Neither is he to conceal any part of necessary truth, when the eminent hazard of people's salvation calleth for the preaching of it, though embittered enemies should take occasion from his preaching of that one truth to reject all truth: for Paul preacheth down circumcision, though

the Jews did take occasion from his so doing to reject the whole gospel: for saith he, then, to wit, if he had preached circumcision, "the offence of the cross is ceased."

7. If men once place religion and worship in rites, ceremonies, and such external observances, the most substantial truths of God and duties of Christianity, will not bear so much weight with them in progress of time as the meanness of those: for though Paul did preach Christ sincerely, 1 Cor. i. 23, and urged obedience to all the duties of the moral law, Rom. xiii. 8, 9; yet, seeing he did not preach circumcision, he was persecuted by the Jews, who placed religion in such external performances: yea, they reject and stumble at the doctrine of salvation preached by him, because he would not preach circumcision also; "Why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased?" which implieth, that his not preaching circumcision, was the cause why they persecuted his person, and stumbled at his doctrine.

VER. 12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

He presseth the exhortation, fourthly, by a wish that their prime seducers, who troubled their outward and inward peace, were cut off from communion with the church, by the sword of excommunication: whereby he sheweth, both that their sin deserved to be so censured, and that the good of the church, if her present distemper could have borne it, did require that this censure had been inflicted.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord Christ, king and head of his church, hath placed power and authority in the church-guides, John xx. 23, being convened together, 1 Cor. v. 4, to cut off from the body of the church, by the sword of excommunication, incorrigible and obstinate offenders, for the destruction of the flesh, that their spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, and that the church be not infected by the contagion of their sin, 1 Cor. v. 5, 6; for by this cutting off, is meant excommunication, as the similitude of leaven, ver. 9, doth teach, being compared with 1 Cor. v. 6; in which chapter excommunication is spoken of, and the apostle alludeth to that phrase of "cutting off from God's people," frequently used in the Old Testament, as Gen. xvii. 14, which did express the censure of excommunication then in use among the Jews; and the apostle's wishing, that they were even cut off who troubled them, supposeth that there was power to cut off such in the church, if the exercise of that power had been seasonable; "I would they were even cut off."

2. The spirit of error may so far prevail among a people, that the exercise of discipline can hardly attain its end among them, to wit, the shaming of the person censured, 1 Cor. v. 5, and the preservation of the church from being leavened, 1 Cor. v. 6. In which case the servants of Christ would proceed with a slow pace, and in all lenity and wisdom to the inflicting of church censures, lest the person censured, and the multitude seduced

by him, be thereby hardened, and the ordinance itself exposed to contempt; and therefore would rather doctrinally declare what censures such persons deserve, than actually inflict the censure itself: for though Paul by himself alone had power to cut off and excommunicate, 1 Tim. i. 20; yet the infection had so spread itself in this church, and the general distemper was so great, that he satisfieth himself with a wish, declaring thereby what their sin deserved, and proceedeth no further; "I would they were even cut off," saith he.

VER. 13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty: only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

The second part of the chapter beginneth in this verse; wherein the apostle, having given a reason of his former wish, ver. 12, (even because those seducers did hinder the course of their vocation, burdening them with the observances of such things as are contrary to evangelical liberty, to the enjoyment whereof they were called by God,) he exhorteth them to take heed of running to the other extreme of abusing their Christian liberty, as if they were thereby freed from all obligation to serve God or man in any thing, and giveth two rules to direct them in the right use of their liberty. First, "They would not use their liberty for an occasion to the flesh;" where by "flesh" is not meant the substance of our fleshly bodies, but the power of sin and corruption which is in every man, Eph. ii. 3, and is seated not only in our carnal, fleshly appetite, but in all the powers of the soul, even the understanding, Rom. viii. 7, and will, or rational appetite, Col. ii. 18, not being excepted. So the sense of the rule prescribed is, that they would not take encouragement from this doctrine of Christian liberty to give license unto the power of sin and corruption within them to break all bonds, and to fulfil its own lusts. Secondly, that they would "by love serve one another;" or, that notwithstanding of this purchased liberty, every one, without exception of persons, would, from the fountain of love, employ himself in all the duties of love for bringing about the good of his neighbour; and, by consequence would straiten, or enlarge himself, in the use of his liberty, as might be most conducing to his neighbour's spiritual edification, Rom. xiv. 13, 15; 1 Cor. viii. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is not any one thing which ought to be more desired and endeavoured by an honest minister, than that the people of God committed to his charge do, in some measure, walk answerably to their Christian calling; and nothing ought to stir up his zeal and indignation more, than when they either actually walk, or are tempted to walk, in a course contrary unto it: for thereby they not only mar the fruits of the gospel to themselves, (see ver. 4,) but also cause it to be evil spoken of by others, 1 Tim. v. 14. Hence is the apostle's zeal so hot against the false apostles, as that he wiseth them to be cut off, even because they tempted those Galatians to undergo a yoke

of servitude contrary to that state of liberty unto which they were called; "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty," saith he.

2. Such is the power and subtilty of inbred corruption, as that it perverteth the nature even of those things which are best, and taketh occasion from them to do wickedly: for there is hazard, lest occasion be taken by corrupt nature, even from the doctrine of Christian liberty, to break all bonds, and to become licentious, as is supposed while he saith, "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."

3. The minister of Jesus Christ ought with great circumspection to guard and cautionate the truth delivered by him; and especially such truths as, not being sufficiently guarded, may readily be mistaken, and made use of for the encouragement of corrupt nature in any vice or error: for such was this doctrine of Christian liberty; and therefore the apostle doth seasonably guard it: "Only," saith he, "use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh."

4. That our Christian liberty, purchased by Christ, may be used aright, it is required that we do not abuse it as an occasion of fleshly liberty, whether, first, by making those things indifferent and free which God hath not made free, as the Gentiles did fornication, 1 Cor. vi. 12, &c.; or, secondly, by the immoderate and excessive use of things in their own nature indifferent, as of meat, drink, apparel; which is frequently condemned; see Rom. xiii. 13: for the apostle prescribeth this as one rule for the right use-making of Christian liberty; "Only use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh."

5. It is not sufficient for the right use-making of Christian liberty that we do not from thence take occasion to sin ourselves, but we must also labour carefully to guard, lest by the offensive and indiscreet use of liberty we give offence, and minister occasion of sin and stumbling unto others: for he prescribeth this as a second rule, that in the use of their liberty, they would "by love serve one another;" having an eye especially upon their neighbour's spiritual edification, Rom. xiv. 13, 15.

6. This freedom and liberty, purchased by Christ, doth not loose the tie of any necessary duty which we are under, whether to God or man. The yoke of duty is no ways repugnant unto, but very consistent with, Christian liberty: for the apostle, having at large exhorted them to stand to this liberty, he subjoineth, "by love serve one another."

7. Though Christianity doth not abolish the civil distinction of masters and servants, Eph. vi. 5, 9; and though all Christians be in some respects the Lord's free-men, 1 Cor. vii. 22; yet they are all (even the greatest not being excepted) mutually servants one to another, in so far as being fellow-members of one body, 1 Cor. xii. 27, they ought not to live unto themselves only, but to spend themselves in their respective employments, for the spiritual and civil advantage of the whole body, and of every particular member thereof, so far as their capacity and calling (2 Cor. viii. 12, 13) do reach: for the apostle enjoineth unto all, without exception, "serve one another."

8. It is not sufficient we do those things which

are in themselves materially good, or conducing to our neighbour's profit and advantage, except what is done of that kind do flow from the fountain of Christian love towards him, 1 Cor. xiii. 2; for, saith he, "serve one another by love."

9. There is no duty so onerous in itself, or so far below us in our esteem, but the grace of love, being lively in the heart, will make us pleasantly stoop unto it, if it were even to serve the meanest person in the world: for he commandeth all, even the greatest, to "serve one another by love;" importing, where love is not this service will hardly be undergone, and that love will make it easy.

VER. 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even in this*: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

He enforceth the last rule by two reasons: first, this serving one another by love is the most compendious way to keep the whole law, seeing the whole law is summed up in that one word or precept, (for the ten precepts of the law are called so many "words," Exod. xxxiv. 27,) of loving our neighbour, (that is, every one, without exception, to whom we have any opportunity offered of doing good, Luke x. 36, 37,) and that, with as much sincerity as we do ourselves. Now love to our neighbour is called the fulfilling of the law, not as if love to God were not thereby commanded also, Matt. xxii. 37, but because love to our neighbour supposeth love to God, and floweth from it, as a stream from the fountain, 1 John v. 1, and as an evidence of it, 1 John iv. 21.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though believers in Jesus Christ be delivered from the condemning sentence of the law, Rom. viii. 1, yet not from the directing power thereof. The law doth always remain a rule of our new obedience, though it cease from being a judge either to justify or condemn us: for the apostle enforceth the duty of love from the authority of the law, which doth enjoin it; for "all the law is fulfilled in one word," &c. saith he.

2. Love to our neighbour is a most comprehensive duty; as comprising, not only inward affection, but also outward action, and extending itself to all the duties, both positive and negative, which are enjoined by the whole second table; see Matt. xxii. 39, "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

3. There is not any, of whatsoever rank or condition, whether friend or foe, Matt. v. 44, to whom we do not owe the affection of love, and the conscientious discharge of all those duties which are commanded in the second table; for we are commanded "to love our neighbour," (that is, as Christ explaineth, Luke x. 36, 37, every man,) as opportunity doth offer.

4. As the precepts of the second table do enjoin every man to love, and go about all other commanded duties towards his neighbour, so also towards himself; for although that inordinate and excessive love to *self* (which is in every man by nature, and whereby a man doth so love himself, as that he postponeth God's glory, and his neigh-

bour's good to the fulfilling of his own fleshly lusts) be nowhere commanded, but expressly guarded against, Matt. x. 39; yet there is a lawful, orderly love to *self*, which is enjoined unto every man: so as that, by all lawful means, he labour to maintain what honour God hath put upon himself, according to the fifth command, and to preserve his own life, according to the sixth command, and so forth of the rest: for the command to "love our neighbour as ourself," supposeth we ought to love ourself, to wit, with subordination to God.

5. The love, and other duties flowing from love, which every man is to carry unto, and to discharge towards, himself, in subordination to God, have the force of a rule and measure unto that love which we owe unto others; so as that we are to love them, first, for God and his command, 1 John iv. 21; secondly, in subordination to God, Matt. x. 37; thirdly, in sincerity; there being both affection, and action flowing from affection, in our love to him, 1 John iii. 18; for so we do, and ought, to love ourselves: Now the law commandeth "to love our neighbour as ourselves."

VER. 15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

Here is a second argument to enforce the exercise of mutual love, taken from some dangerous effects which, doubtless, had already followed in part among those Galatians, occasioned by their debates and controversies, and would yet follow more upon the want of love; to wit, first, their bitter strifes, backbitings, railings, and reproaches, set forth by the biting of wild beasts: and, secondly, other real injuries, by fraud or violence, which seem to be pointed at by "devouring," which is more than biting: and lastly, as a consequence of the two former, a total vastation and consumption of the whole church.

DOCTRINES.

1. As it is a matter of no small difficulty to entertain love among the members of a church, when they are divided in opinion and judgment about religious truths; so where love groweth cold, church-divisions have ordinarily sad and scandalous effects, which argue little of a tender frame of heart in those who have them; even such as are here mentioned, "biting and devouring one another."

2. However a sectarian spirit doth ordinarily pretend to much sobriety and meekness, especially when it first appeareth, and hath but few to give it any countenance, Rom. xvi. 18; yet so soon as it hath gathered strength, and gained many followers, it hath been always found most bitter and cruel: for the effects of this rending, schismatic spirit among those Galatians were no less than "biting and devouring one another."

3. In time of church divisions, though that party which is for truth and piety be always the most sober, Jude 20, 21, yet, considering that even they have much unmortified corruption, apt to be provoked by the insolency of their schis-

matic adversaries, there is no small hazard, lest even they vent much of fleshly zeal and passion, and while they are defending truth, become guilty of several miscarriages, and so be rendered much the worse of their contests and divisions: for the sin which he doth partly reprove, and partly guard against, was mutual, and of both parties; "If ye bite and devour one another," saith he.

4. When schism in a church is not only maintained on the one hand with fleshly passion, strife, reproaches, and other real injuries, but when it is also impugned upon the other hand, not so much with the sword of the Spirit the word of truth, as with the same fleshly and sinful means, then especially is schism the forerunner and procuring cause of desolation and ruin to both parties, and to the whole church; and this not only because of that heinous guilt which is in it, but also that stumbling blocks are thereby multiplied, which cannot but prevail mightily to make men doubt of all truth, and in the end prove nullifidians: for the apostle holdeth this forth as the consequence of their biting and devouring one another: "Take heed," saith he, "lest ye be destroyed one of another."

5. As it is a matter of great difficulty to make men of credit and parts, being once engaged in their contentious debates, to project the consequences of their so doing further than the hoped-for victory against their contrary party, Acts xv. 37, &c., so it were no small wisdom, before folk meddle with strife, so as to engage their fleshly passions in it, however they may be otherwise provoked, seriously to project and consider what woeful, sad and dangerous effects, may follow thereupon to the church of God: for, saith he, "Take heed, lest ye be destroyed one of another."

VER. 16. *This* I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

He returneth to the first rule given, ver. 13, (to wit, that they "would not use their liberty for an occasion to the flesh,") by a transition usual unto him when he is further to insist upon any thing formerly spoken, (see chap. iv. ver. 1.) and furnisheth them with an help for reducing that rule unto practice, to wit, "walking in the Spirit," or following the motions and directions of the renewed part, or new man of grace in the heart, (for which the word Spirit, when it is opposed to flesh, is usually taken, see John iii. 6;) the fruit of their walking thus he sheweth should be their mortifying, and keeping at under the flesh, or their corrupt and unrenewed part, in so far, as though the lusts, or first inordinate motions of inbred corruption (for so is lust taken in the tenth commandment) would not be totally suppressed, yet they should not be fulfilled, or brought unto the complete act, with deliberation and consent, which doth more fully speak that which is, ver. 13, concerning their not using liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is not any possibility of getting the power of inbred corruption subdued, or the lusts

of sinful flesh curbed to any saving purpose by a natural man, or by any man without a work of saving grace wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God: for he prescribeth unto them "walking in the Spirit," as the only remedy against "fulfilling the lusts of the flesh;" which supposeth that the Spirit, or the work of saving grace and regeneration wrought by the Spirit, must be first in them.

2. The prevailing of corruption over Christians, even to the accomplishing of the outward acts thereof after deliberation, (which sometimes hath come to pass, as in David and others,) doth not prove that they never had a work of grace, or that they have totally fallen from it, but only that they walk not in the Spirit; the motions and directions of the renewed part are not obeyed, but quenched; the power whereof, wherewith the renewed faculties are endued is not exercised, and hereby God is provoked to withdraw his actuating grace, so that our lusts, once in part mortified, cannot but gather strength, and range abroad in the soul without any effectual resistance: for Paul saith not, if ye have the Spirit, but "if ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

3. The sin of lust and covetousness, as it speaketh the first motions of corruption, whether in our understanding, will, or sensual appetite, towards unlawful and forbidden objects, namely, such motions as are sudden, and run before our deliberate consent, they cannot be wholly abandoned by the child of God in this life, no, not though he use the utmost of diligence and watchfulness: for, upon their walking in the Spirit, he doth not promise that those lusts shall not be in them; only, "they shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

4. It is a minister's duty to insist so far upon any point of necessary truth, until he make it, so far as he is able, sufficiently plain according to the capacity of the hearers, as also if the truth in hand contain a practical duty, the practice whereof is attended with many difficulties, he is to insist upon it until he furnish the hearers with some pertinent helps and motives unto that duty: for so doth Paul insist upon that truth delivered, ver. 13, "This I say then;" and by insisting doth explain it, "ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh;" and furnisheth them with an help how it shall be practised, "Walk in the Spirit," saith he.

VER. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He proveth that their following the motions of the renewed part, should keep the unrenewed part at under, by two arguments; first, because the renewed, and unrenewed part, or spirit and flesh, do lust against, incessantly oppose and labour to suppress one another, by reason of that great contrariety which is betwixt those two principles, as being of a different original, John iii. 6, and supported and assisted with contrary powers, ver 19 and 22: whence he sheweth it

doth follow, that we cannot completely effectuate neither the good nor the evil which we would; the flesh always opposing that which we would according to the direction of the Spirit; the Spirit again opposing what we would according to the direction of the flesh: which latter is the conclusion he doth here prove, as it is expressed, ver. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. As a minister ought to point at some helps unto the people for their better discharging of any difficult duty, so he ought to make it appear that those are helps indeed, and how they contribute for the more easy practising of the duty pressed; otherwise they receive no encouragement thereby, neither to set about the duty, nor to make use of those helps in order to the duty: for the apostle having prescribed an help for keeping the flesh at under, doth here demonstrate clearly, that the thing prescribed doth really help, as appeareth from the scope.

2. As the regenerate man hath a renewed principle of grace in all the faculties and powers of the soul, wrought in him by the Spirit of God, so he hath in all those some remainder of corruption yet unmortified, whereby his whole mind, will and affections are partly spiritual, partly carnal, both flesh and Spirit are in him; "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit," saith he.

3. None of those powers or principles in the regenerate man, are dead, dull, or merely passive, but both of them are working and active; for "the flesh lusteth and the Spirit lusteth," whereby is meant, that both of them do sway and incline the whole man to work in a way congruous to their respective natures, the one to good, and the other to evil.

4. The activity of these two active principles is in a flat opposition the one to the other; so that in one and the same man, and while he is about one and the same action, there is a conflict and battle betwixt these two contrary parties, Rom. vii. 19—21. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."

5. As there is a mixture of both these principles in all the powers and faculties of the regenerate man, so there is a mixture of their respective influence and efficacy in every action of his, whereby, though there be a prevalency of the one above the other in some actions, yet there is not one action to which both of them do not contribute somewhat: if not by a causal influence, yet by some measure of active resistance; "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."

6. Hence it followeth, that as the actions of the regenerate are not perfect and free from a sinful mixture, so there is some difference betwixt his worst actions, and those same actions as gone about by the unregenerate man, even this, that the flesh doth not advance with a full gale, but meeteth with the contrary tide of resistance from the Spirit in some degree: for, as the "flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so the Spirit lusteth against the flesh: and ye cannot do the thing that ye would," saith he.

7. Though unregenerate men may have somewhat like to this spiritual combat, even a conflict

sometimes betwixt the natural conscience, and rebellious affections, Rom. ii. 1; yet they have not this very same combat here spoken of, wherein one faculty is not carried against the other, but every faculty, as it is flesh, is carried against itself, as it is spirit; now that this combat is not in the unregenerate man, appeareth from this, that he is wholly flesh, Gen. vi. 5, and not at all spirit, and this combat is betwixt flesh and spirit; for "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit."

8. The mutual resistance and opposition of those two parties, "flesh and spirit," in the regenerate man, as it beginneth at the very first rise of every action in the understanding, will or affections; so it continueth and waxeth always more fierce, as the action is carried on towards its full accomplishment by the executive faculties: for, saith he, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would;" importing, that our willing of good or evil, is more free from this opposition (though not altogether free) than our actual doing or accomplishing of it, being so willed; see Rom. vii. 18.

VER. 18. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

He proveth the same conclusion, secondly, showing that they who are led and guided by the regenerate part, or an inward principle of grace within (which is all one with "walking in the Spirit," spoken of, ver. 16.) are "not under the law," whereby is not meant, that they are not under the law as a rule and guide of new obedience; for both the word and the Spirit do guide, as shall appear from the first doctrine; but they are not under the condemning, Rom. viii. 1, nor yet the irritating power of the law, whereby the more that unregenerate men are urged unto rigid obedience by the law, the more doth their corrupt nature spurn and rebel, as being desperate to get all done which the law enjoineth. This irritating power of the law is spoken of, Rom. vii. 5. Now, they who are led by the Spirit, are not thus under the law, because unto such a fountain of grace is opened up for enabling them in some measure to do what the law enjoineth, Phil. iv. 13, and for pardoning them wherein they fall short, 1 John ii. 1, 2; so that corruption in them is not so much irritated by the law as in the unregenerate, and by consequence the lusts of the flesh are not fulfilled, as was expressed, ver. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. The regenerate part, or new man of grace, performeth the office of a guide and leader to the godly in all their actions which are truly spiritual; in so far as, first, itself is ruled by the word, and to be tried by the word, Isa. viii. 20, which word alone is the external light and lantern to direct our steps, Ps. exix. 105, as the light of the sun or candle is to the eye. Secondly, the work of grace itself, as the understanding is thereby enlightened, is the internal light whereby the regenerate man doth spiritually understand the things of God revealed in Scripture, 1 Cor. ii. 12; as by the internal light of the eye we dis-

cern those things which are made conspicuous by the external light of the sun or candle. Thirdly, the same work of grace, as the will and affections are thereby renewed, being actuated by the continual supply of exciting grace from the Spirit of the Lord, is a strengthening guide to all spiritual actions, by whose influence alone the regenerate man (who as to any principle of nature and free-will within himself, is not sufficient to think any thing, 2 Cor. iii. 5.) is rendered able, and made actually to walk in the ways of God, Phil. ii. 13; for, while he saith, "If ye be led by the Spirit," he supposeth the office of the Spirit and regenerate part is to guide and lead.

2. The natural man, so long as he remaineth in that state, is so much a slave to his sinful lusts that those things which are appointed of God to curb and make them weaker, are so far from bringing about the end proposed, that his lusts are thereby enraged, and made more violent: for the apostle (being to prove that those who are led by the Spirit do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; which is laid down to be proved, ver. 16,) saith, "such are not under the law," to wit, the strict and rigid exaction of the law; importing, that the rigidity of the law, which of its own nature tendeth to restrain sin, and to make it weaker, is turned by the unregenerate man unto an occasion for the fulfilling of his lusts.

VER. 19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

For the better understanding and observing of the rule delivered, ver. 13, "use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," he maketh a catalogue of some works of the flesh, which were best known to those Galatians: and, first, he declareth the nature and condition of those works, that though the inward root of concupiscence from whence they flow, be hid, and therefore it is not easy to convince a man that he is led by it; yet those effects and works of the flesh are evident and patent, so that a man may pass judgment upon the prevalency of flesh and concupiscence in his heart, when those its effects do break out in his life. Secondly, he maketh a particular enumeration of seventeen of those works, expressly showing that there are several other works of the flesh besides these, only he thinketh it sufficient to have instanced these, and these rather than others, because probably they have been too commonly practised among the Galatians: which works of the flesh here enumerated, are, first, adultery, or the sin of filthiness betwixt parties, whereof one at least is married. Secondly, fornication, or the sin of filthiness betwixt parties both free from the yoke of marriage. Thirdly, uncleanness, under which are

usually comprehended all other sorts of filthy lusts, and particularly that against nature, Rom. i. 24. Fourthly, lasciviousness, or wantonness, whereby is meant all petulant, and wanton behaviour, tending to excite the lust of filthiness, whether in ourselves or others. These are, ver. 19. Fifthly, idolatry, a sin whereby religious worship, due to God only, (Matt. iv. 10,) is given unto those which by nature are no gods, chap. iv. 9, or, whereby the true God is worshipped in, or before images, Exod. xxxii. 4, 5. The former idolatry is forbidden in the first command, the latter in the second. Sixthly, witchcraft, or a devilish art, whereby certain men or women having under some violent fit of a temptation entered a covenant, either expressly or implicit, with the devil, are enabled by the devil's assistance, upon their using certain rites and ceremonies prescribed by him, to work things strange and wonderful, so far as God permitteth. Seventhly, hatred, or, as the word signifieth, enmity and hatred in the heart towards our neighbour, joined with a rooted desire to do him hurt, whether for apprehended or real injuries. Eighthly, variance, or contention and strife by disgraceful and opprobrious words, arising from the fore-mentioned enmity and alienation of hearts. Ninthly, emulations, not that good emulation whereby we strive to excel others in that which is good, not for love of applause or other by-respects, but merely from the love which we carry unto that which is good; this is commanded, 1 Cor. xiv. 12; but carnal emulations, whereby we are grieved at the good which is in others, not so much from hatred to their good, as because it overshadoweth us, and therefore is joined with a desire to outstrip them in that good, which we are grieved for, wherein it differeth from envy. Tenthly, wrath, whereby, according to the force of the word in the original, is meant that sudden passionate commotion, and perturbation of the affections, through apprehension of an injury offered, transforming a man to a very beast, and thrusting him forward to act some mischief, Luke iv. 28, 29. Eleventhly, strife, which, as it differeth from the eighth work of the flesh formerly mentioned, doth signify a certain kind of litigious striving, probably about civil rights and interests, which, when it is for trifling matters, or in defence of unrighteousness, 1 Cor. vi. 8, or separated from a spirit of Christian meekness and condescendence, 1 Cor. vi. 7, is a work of the flesh here condemned. Twelfthly, seditions, or rending of those into divers factions, who ought to be joined in one common society: (for so much the word in the original doth hint at:) which rending work, when it falleth out in the state, is called by the name of sedition, and in the church by the name of schism, especially when there is a rent not only in opinion, but also in affection and design or endeavour, each party labouring to counterminne the other. Thirteenthly, heresies, which are somewhat more than simple schism and faction, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19, even gross and dangerous error, voluntarily held (Tit. iii. 11) and factiously maintained by some person or persons within the visible church, Acts xx. 30, in opposition to some chief or substantial truths groundd upon, and drawn

from the holy Scripture, as the places cited, and the notation of the word in the original will in a good part bear. These are, ver. 20. Fourteenthly, envyings, which are those base passions, whereby we grieve at the good and prosperity of others, without any endeavour to attain unto that good ourselves. Fifteenthly, murders, or slaughters, which frequently follow upon the former, whereby is not meant the execution of public justice upon malefactors; for that is commanded, Lev. xxiv. 21; but the satisfaction of private revenge, by shedding of blood, and the taking away of our neighbour's life unjustly, though under pretence of public justice, 1 Kings xxi. 13. Sixteenthly, drunkenness, when men do drink wine, or strong drink excessively, and beyond that measure which fitteth them both in soul and body for the service of God, and duties of their calling. Seventeenthly, revellings; the word doth usually signify excess of belly-cheer in riotous feasts, joined with all sorts of lascivious behaviour. The apostle, having made this enumeration, that he might terrify them from the practice of those evils, giveth them timeous warning now by letter, as he had done formerly by preaching when he was with them, that impenitent persists in these and such like sins, should never inherit the kingdom of heaven, and by consequence should be eternally damned, Matt. xxv. 41. I say, impenitent persists; for this and all such threatenings are to be understood with the exception of repentance, Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not sufficient that a minister, having divided his hearers in two ranks, to wit, spiritual and carnal, or renewed and unrenewed, denounce eternal wrath to the latter, and promise God's favour and life eternal to the former; but it is also necessary, that he give evident and discriminating marks of both, and of the one from the other, whereby every one may be in some measure enabled without mistake to judge of his own inward estate, and so to know whether the judgment denounced, or mercy promised, be his allotted portion: for the apostle, giveth such discriminating marks of flesh and spirit from their respective effects; "The works of the flesh are manifest," saith he; and ver. 22, "the fruit of the Spirit is love."

2. As it is not sufficient for a minister to condemn and reprove sin in the general, without condescending upon some particular instances and examples; because general doctrine is not so well understood, and especially in the reproof of sin, it is looked upon almost by every hearer as if he himself were not concerned in it: so in the matter of instances and examples (because he cannot, neither were it convenient to enumerate all) such would be condescended upon as are best known, and most commonly practised among those to whom he preacheth: for the apostle giveth such instances of the works of the flesh, as for the most part, the present defection, schism and distemper flowing from thence, which was among those Galatians, did carry them unto idolatry, heresy, variance, strife, &c., and, as it seemeth, all the rest have been but too

commonly practised amongst them, as adultery, fornication, &c.

3. Sin hath seated itself, not only in the sensual appetite, but in the more noble faculties of the soul also, namely, our understanding and will : so that the whole man is corrupted by nature, and altogether flesh ; for the works of the flesh here enumerated are of three sorts, according to those three parts of corrupt flesh, or nature ; to wit, our reason, will, and sensual appetite : so as some of them are seated in, and have their rise from each of those ; the four first, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and wantonness, and the two last, belong to the sensual appetite ; idolatry and heresy to blind and corrupt reason ; witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings, murders, belong partly to the depraved will, and partly to the sensual appetite.

4. Not only are grossly scandalous evils, works of the flesh, excluding those who are guilty from the kingdom of heaven, such as adultery, witchcraft, &c., but also such sins as, being seated in the heart, do not break forth to the view of the world, of which sort are hatred, emulations, envyings : for even "they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

5. There is no sin so gross, as being against all piety, conscience, and the very light of nature itself, which people have not need to guard against, and ministers to deter them from by the terrible denunciations of God's heavy judgment against those who shall be found guilty of such like ; and that because the seed of all sin is in every man, Rom. iii. 10, &c. And there is no sin into which a man given over of God will not fall, when he is tempted to it, Exod. x. 27 ; for the apostle thinketh it necessary to scare them even from adultery, witchcraft, and murder, by showing that "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

6. That a minister may bear down and suppress sin amongst the people committed to his charge to any purpose, it is necessary he inveigh by just and necessary reproof, not only against the gross and external acts of sin and wickedness, but also against the first motions and conception of those sins in the heart, and every thing which may prove an occasion of breaking forth in those grosser evils ; for the apostle setteth forth the evil not only of adultery, fornication, and uncleanness, but also of wantonness ; not only of witchcraft, but also of hatred and variance, which often prove temptations unto witchcraft ; and not only of murders, but also of wrath, envyings, emulations, strife : all which make way for murders.

7. Ministers are God's watchmen, Ezek. iii. 17, and therefore are bound to give faithful and timely warning unto every man of his spiritual hazard ; lest otherwise the blood of people be required at his hands : this made Paul often to forewarn both presently, and in time past, that they "who do those things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

8. Though former warnings have not the expected success ; yet, the minister of Christ must not faint nor despair, as if there were no hope ; but ought to renew his zeal, and reiterate those

very same warnings and threatenings, as not knowing when the Lord may give the long-wished-for blessing, 2 Tim. ii. 25 ; thus did Paul ; "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past."

9. As life eternal and the state of glory to be enjoyed after this, is a kingdom, because there shall be an order betwixt king and subject there, the one commanding, the other obeying, without any hazard of rebellion and faction, Matt. vi. 10 ; there shall be perfect freedom from all oppression and slavery there, Eph. iv. 30 ; yea, every subject shall enjoy a kingdom and wear a crown there, James i. 12 : so this kingdom is given, not for our merit or works, but by right of sonship and by virtue of our adoption, even as the inheritance is conveyed unto the heir : for saith the apostle, speaking of heaven, "They shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

10. Though there be a mixture of sheep and goats, wheat and tares, godly and ungodly in the visible church, Matt. xiii. 29, 30, yet, in heaven there shall be no such mixture, no unclean thing shall enter there ; for "they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," saith Paul.

VER. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23. Meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.

The apostle, in like manner, for the better understanding, and the more easy practising of the remedy prescribed against fleshly lusts, ver. 16, he giveth a catalogue of some of those gracious virtues, and the exercise of them, which flow from the Spirit, or the root of grace in the heart : and having called the former instances, ver. 19, only "works of the flesh," he designeth these by the name of "fruits of the Spirit ;" because they are acceptable to God, Rom. xii. 1, and profitable to the man himself, 1 Tim. vi. 6, as savoury and wholesome fruit, which the works of the flesh are not, Rom. vi. 21 ; next, he enumerateth nine of those fruits, not as if they were not more, for there are many more virtues than those, as knowledge, hope, patience, 2 Pet. i. 5, &c., but because those are virtues standing almost in direct opposition to the former vices, and such as for the exercise thereof he wished chiefly among those Galatians ; which are, first, love, or an holy affection whereby we love God for himself, Matt. xxii. 37, and our neighbour in and for God, 1 John iv. 21. Secondly, joy, that holy affection of the soul, delighting itself and taking pleasure in those things, and in that measure which God alloweth. Thirdly, peace, or that concord and agreement which a reconciled soul hath with God, Rom. v. 1, and which he endeavoureth to have with all men in God, Heb. xii. 14. Fourthly, longsuffering, whereby we moderate anger, do patiently bear and forgive even many injuries, Col. iii. 12, 13. Fifthly, gentleness, or kindness, whereby we labour to be affable and pleasant unto our neighbour, and easy to be entreated, even when he hath wronged us, Rom.

xii. 14, Eph. iv. 32. Sixthly, goodness, a virtue whereby we are inclined to communicate what good is in us for the advantage of our neighbour both in his spiritual, 1 Pet. iv. 10, and bodily, Gal. vi. 10, estate. Seventhly, faith, whereby we conceive in this place is understood not so much justifying faith, and faith towards God, which is the root and fountain of all those fruits, ver. 6, as faith and fidelity towards men, whereby from a renewed heart and for God's glory we speak nothing but truth, Eph. iv. 25, and make conscience to perform whatsoever is undertaken by us, Psa. xv. 4. Eighthly, meekness, a virtue whereby we moderate anger, so as that we are not provoked but for such causes, and not more or longer provoked than the word of God alloweth, whereby also we do speedily restrain and suppress anger when it hath transgressed the just bounds, Eph. iv. 26. Ninthly, temperance, or continency, whereby our fleshly appetite is kept within bounds, in seeking after honour, meat, drink, pleasure or riches. Lastly, the apostle, having made this enumeration, that he may excite the Galatians to the practice of those virtues, he commendeth them from this, that the law was not made against them or the practisers of them, either to condemn or accuse them. In which words, by a figure, or flower of speech, more is to be understood than is spoken, as Psa. li. 17, even that the moral law (concerning the standing whereof, as to its directing power, there was no controversy betwixt Paul and his adversaries) doth expressly command and commend them, which could not be said of those ceremonial abstinences or performances, so much urged by the false apostles.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is no way for gracious virtues, or the fruits of the Spirit, to grow and thrive in our heart, unless the works of the flesh be set against, and in some measure mortified: these thistles and weeds must be plucked up, else they draw the sap and strength of the heart from the good grain: the apostle's method pointeth at so much while he engageth them to mortify the works of the flesh in the first place, and next commendeth unto them the fruits of the Spirit; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c.

2. It is not sufficient that we set about the work of mortification and curbing of sin and vice, but must also endeavour to have the heart replenished with the contrary gracious virtues; otherwise sin, being as it were overpowered, may lurk for a season, but will afterwards revive and take strength, Matt. xii. 44, 45, for the apostle, having engaged them to mortify the works of the flesh, doth now excite them to the exercise of gracious virtues; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c.

3. There is no virtue truly saving and acceptable to God, but that which floweth from the grace of regeneration. The virtues of the heathen, how excellent soever they seemed to be, were but shadows of saving virtues, as not coming from a clean fountain, a gracious root in the heart, John xiv. 4, nor yet levelling at the right end, God's glory in the chief place, Col. iii. 17, but some other thing inferior to that, Acts xxiv. 26;

besides, they were not done in faith, and so could not be acceptable to God, Heb. xi. 6; for the apostle calleth all those which are virtues indeed, the fruits and effects of the Spirit; "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," saith he.

4. If we compare the graces of God's Spirit with the works of the flesh, there will appear such a beauty in the one, such deformity in the other, such solid satisfaction and contentment in the one, and such disquietness and vexation of spirit in the other, that laying aside the difference which is betwixt them by reason of their original and event, these other considerations may serve abundantly to make us fall in love with the graces of God's Spirit, and abominate the works of the flesh: for the works of the flesh are "adultery, witchcraft, hatred, strife, envyings, murders; but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering," &c.

5. We are to judge of persons and practices, by thinking well of them, or otherwise, not according to the common esteem in which they are among men, 1 Cor. iv. 3, but according to the esteem that God hath of them, and according to what the word of God, which is the absolute rule of right and wrong, truth and error, doth pronounce concerning them: for Paul judgeth it sufficient to commend the practice of those virtues from this, that the law of God did commend them, and approved of those who made conscience of them; "Against such there is no law," saith he.

VER. 24. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

The apostle, in this verse, addeth a new argument to enforce the practice of that first rule given, ver. 13, and cleared, ver. 19—21, to wit, that "they should not give occasion to, or fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" because those who are Christ's, as they all professed themselves to be, have, by virtue of Christ's death, crucified and put to death their fleshly corruption, with all its sinful motions, whether they be sinful affections and passions, such as those whereby the man's mind doth suffer, is troubled and afflicted, as malice, envy, anger, and the like; or whether they be sinful lusts, such as these which are stirred up by fleshly carnal baits and pleasures, as motions to intemperance, uncleanness, and such like. Now those who are Christ's, are said to have crucified all those, because every one who profeseth the name of Christ hath engaged himself by his profession and covenant sealed in baptism so to do, Rom. vi. 3, 4; and the truly regenerate, besides this engagement by profession, have actually begun this work: so that though this body of corrupt flesh be in them; yet by his Spirit, Rom. viii. 13, and by imitating his cross, Rom. vi. 6, they are upon the work of mortifying it, suppressing the endeavours, and smothering the effects of it, Rom. vi. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. All they who are led by, and walk in the Spirit, or who are truly regenerate, and who are actually engaged in the work of mortifying their

corrupt nature, are Christ's in a peculiar manner, to wit, by right of donation from the Father, John vi. 37, by right of emption or redemption, 1 Cor. vi. 20, and by right of resignation, all such having actually resigned themselves unto Christ, as a mansion for him to dwell and walk in, 1 Cor. vi. 19, and in every thing to be guided by him, Acts ix. 6; for the apostle useth those expressions indifferently as being of equal extent, "Walk in the Spirit," ver. 16, and "if ye be led by the Spirit," ver. 18, and in this verse, "they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh."

2. The work of mortification striketh at all sin, and spareth none, as well pleasant sins, whereby fleshly lusts are satisfied, as other more vexatious evils, whereby the mind doth in a kind suffer, and is afflicted: for speaking of this work, he saith, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," that is, the root of corruption, and then they have crucified all its branches, not only affections, or vexing passions, but also desirable lusts.

3. There is not any argument more moving or effectually exciting unto the work of mortification with a sincere Christian, than that which is taken from his engagement to it by profession, and the first beginnings thereof wrought in him already by the Spirit of God; for this is the apostle's scope, that they would not walk in, or fulfil the lusts of the flesh, because all of them were engaged by profession to crucify the flesh, and some had actually begun to do so already; "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," saith he.

VER. 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

He enforceeth also the remedy prescribed against fleshly lusts, ver. 16, and cleared, ver. 22, 23, even that "they would walk after the Spirit," because they who live in the Spirit, or are made partakers of that new life of grace in regeneration, John iii. 5, 6, (according as they all professed themselves to be) must of necessity walk in the Spirit, by following in their life and conversation the motions and directions of the new man of grace in the heart. The force of which consequence lieth in this, that as the principle of life is within, whether flesh or spirit, so must the actions, fruits, and effects flowing from that principle be.

DOCTRINES.

1. The minister of Jesus Christ is not to bind heavy burdens upon the Lord's people, without so much as touching them with one of his little fingers himself, Matt. xxiii. 4, but ought to lay the edge of every necessary exhortation unto his own heart with the first, and thereby to evidence that as he doth not look on himself as free from the yoke of duty no more than others; so he sincerely intendeth by his own practice to hold forth a real copy of that which he presseth upon others, 1 Tim. iv. 12; for Paul directeth this exhortation to himself as well as to them; "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," saith he.

2. The Lord's method in bestowing grace upon graceless sinners is, first, to infuse the principles of a new life, or gracious habits and powers in the soul; and next, to actuate these powers, making them actually to do those works which are spiritually good. Spiritual motion and action presupposeth a principle of a spiritual life, as a thing previous unto, and different from it: for saith he, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

3. To walk in the Spirit, or to follow the conduct of God's Spirit, and of his gracious work in us, is a far other thing than to cast by the rule of the word, and to follow only whatever motions or impressions are set home with any forcible impulse upon our spirits, as if those were the motions of the Spirit of God, which may haply be motions of our own corrupt flesh, or suggestions from Satan, 2 Thess. ii. 11. This walking in the Spirit here exhorted unto, is walking orderly and by rule, even by the rule of God's word, Isa. viii. 20; for so much doth the word in the original import, which signifieth to *walk orderly*, by rule, by line, by measure, as soldiers do march into the battle; "Let us walk in the Spirit," saith he.

4. Though a man cannot pass sentence upon his state before God, whether it be good or bad, by some more or fewer particular acts of his life, 1 Kings viii. 46; yet he may and ought to pass sentence upon it according to his way, and the ordinary strain of his life and conversation. A godless conversation argueth a carnal heart, destitute of all spiritual life; and a pious conversation doth argue a renewed heart, and a principle of spiritual life within: for so much will the apostle's reasoning bear; "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

VER. 26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

The apostle (having hitherto prosecuted and enforced the use-making of that first rule, given ver. 13, for directing them in the right use of Christian liberty) returneth now to prosecute the other rule, "By love serve one another;" and in this verse debortheth them from some vices which do wholly impede this service of love, especially from ambition, or an itching desire after vain glory, estimation, and applause; which vice is usually attended with other two: first provoking of others, chiefly inferiors, by reproaching and doing of real injuries to them, as being nothing in the vain-glorious man's esteem, he esteemeth so much of himself. Secondly, envying of others, chiefly superiors and equals, in so far as any thing in them doth seem to eclipse that glory and esteem of which the vain-glorious man is so much desirous.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though a man may lawfully carry a due regard unto, and have a care of, his own good name and estimation among others, in its own place, Rom. xii. 17; especially that hereby he may be kept in a better capacity to do good unto those with whom he doth converse, Matt. v. 16; yet desire of applause and approbation from men

is sinful, and to be eschewed, when we seek after and are satisfied with applause or esteem for those things which are not in us, 2 Kings x. 16, or which are not worthy of so much esteem as we do seek for, Amos vi. 13, or are not praiseworthy at all, as not being commended of God, Phil. iii. 19; or when we seek after applause from men, even for things praiseworthy, not in subordination to, but equally with, or more than, the honour of God, Matt. vi. 2, or to be approved of him, John xii. 43; for this is the desire of vain glory, from which the apostle dehortheth; "Let us not be desirous of vain glory," saith he.

2. How this desire of vain glory impeded love and peace; and how all glory of this kind is but vain or empty glory, see Phil. ii. 3, Doct. 2, 3.

3. This lust and desire of vain glory is so subtle, as taking its rise sometimes from those things in us which are good, 2 Cor. xii. 7, and so desirable, as tending to make others prostrate themselves before the idol of those apprehended or real excellences in us which we ourselves do so much adore; that the best of men, and those who are endued with excellent graces, gifts, and privileges, have need to guard and watch, lest even they be overtaken with it; for therefore, as one reason, doth Paul include himself in this exhortation; "Let us not be desirous of vain glory."

4. Though it be lawful and praiseworthy to provoke and excite one another to love and good works, Heb. x. 24, chiefly by our good example and forwardness in every commanded duty, 2 Cor. ix. 2; yet, when by doing of real injuries unto others we provoke and excite corruption in them, to take some sinful course for their own ease or redress, 1 Sam. xxv. 33, 34, we are herein guilty, and that not only of committing sin ourselves, but of being the occasion of sin unto others, and therefore would eschew it: for this is it the apostle forbiddeth, even "provoking one another."

5. In striving against any sin, we would look not only upon that sin alone, but also upon those other possibly less pleasant and baser sins which of necessity do accompany it; that so our indignation may be heightened the more against it, as carrying with it a train of such attendants: for here the apostle, dehorting them from the desire of vain glory, that he may make them the more to detest it, holdeth forth the necessary dependence which two other vexations and base evils have upon it; "Provoking one another, envying one another," saith he.

CHAPTER VI.

In the first part of this chapter he presseth the exercise of mutual love, in two exhortations. And first, he exhortheth them to endeavour the reclaiming of those who were fallen, ver. 1, and to bear patiently with the sinful infirmities one of another; because, first, hereby they should obey the command enjoining mutual love, ver. 2; secondly, self-conceit, which marreth the exercise of this duty, is but a self-deceiving, ver. 3; and therefore he prescribeth a remedy against that evil, to wit, self-searching; and enforceeth it, be-

cause, first, they should attain to such gloriation as God alloweth of, ver. 4. And secondly, every man must give an account of his own actions to God, ver. 5. In the second place, he exhortheth unto beneficence in the general, and especially towards their ministers, ver. 6. And, having held forth God for a party unto those who neglect this duty, he doth press it from the similitude of sowing and reaping, ver. 7, which he enlargeth and applieth to an harvest of death and corruption to be reaped by those who do evil, and of life eternal by those who do well, ver. 8, whence he enforceeth perseverance in the study of beneficence, promising the expected fruit of their so doing in due time, ver. 9, and so concludeth the exhortation, pressing upon them the use-making of the present opportunity, ver. 10.

In the second part, he concludeth the epistle: first, insinuating how much he loved them, ver. 11. Secondly, insinuating that the false apostles were not acted from love to them, but from hypocrisy, worldly policy, ver. 12, and from vain glory, ver. 13. Thirdly, he opposeth his own truly Christian carriage to those sins of the false apostles, showing he gloried only in the cross of Christ, and that the world and applause from men were undervalued by him, ver. 14; of both which he giveth two reasons; first, nothing worldly is accounted of by Christ, but the new creature only, ver. 15; secondly, glorying in Christ, and in the study of piety, and of the new creature, is the only rule in walking according to which there is peace, ver. 16. Fourthly, the apostle (having discharged any to trouble him further, whether by their errors or calumnies, seeing the standing prints of his sufferings did abundantly refute both, ver. 17,) saluteth them with his ordinary farewell wish, ver. 18.

VER. 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

The apostle, having (chap. v. ver. 26) dehorted from some vices which do wholly impede that service by love which is enjoined, chap. v. 13, he doth in the first part of this chapter exhort them to several duties in which the exercise of mutual love doth consist. And first he speaketh to those who are "spiritual," that is, such as had received a large measure of spiritual graces, whereby they were preserved from the subtle snares of sin and Satan, which had entrapped others; and who are called "strong," Rom. xv. 1, and "perfect," to wit, comparatively, Phil. iii. 15. Those he exhortheth to endeavour the reclaiming and restoring (both to the sense of God's pardoning grace, and to amendment of life) of all such who were "overtaken," and, as it were, inconsiderately and suddenly surprised with any sin, (for the active verb of the word "overtaken" in the original signifieth to do a thing preposterously and in haste, 1 Cor. xi. 21;) and in order hereto, that in the use of all means undertaken for this end, whether of admonition, reproof, or necessary correction, they would exercise the grace of spiritual meekness, suppressing all fleshly passions, and revengeful

affections. Which exhortation he enforceth by two arguments: the first whereof is laid down by way of admonition in this verse, that every man, even the best, while he dealeth with the faults of others, would enter in a deep consideration of his own frailty, and how easily under a temptation he may be surprised with the same, the like, or a greater sin.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though it be very ordinary for men to bear too much with sin, both in themselves and others, 1 Sam. iii. 13, yet there is another sinful extremity to be avoided, to wit, when under pretence of hatred to, or just indignation against, the sins of others, we give them over as incorrigible, and cannot admonish, reprove, or in any thing carry ourselves towards them in the spirit of meekness: for, saith the apostle, "If a man," or, as the word may also read by way of obviating an objection, "Though a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one," &c.; which supposeth that some were apt to think themselves freed from the duty here commanded towards a person so overtaken; and the apostle sheweth that, nevertheless, they were bound to restore him, and deal meekly with him, even though he were overtaken in a fault.

2. This sin of too much vigour and severity towards the sinful failings and escapes of others, (though it pretend to zeal, Isa. lxxv. 5, yet) hath its rise from pride and ambition; while the rigid critic and lofty censurer of another man's faults, doth not so much seek after his brother's amendment, as to beget in the minds of others a good opinion of himself, as if he were singular for holiness and hatred of sin above others: for the connexion of the two chapters doth show that this sin here guarded against hath some kind of dependence upon vain glory; "Let us not be desirous of vain glory," chap. v. 26; and, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, restore him in the spirit of meekness."

3. The minister of Jesus Christ would labour so to digest his exhortations unto duties, that his very expressions and convey of them being fitted to the purpose in hand, may be as so many forcible motives to bear in that duty unto which he exhorteth: for the apostle being here to enforce the exercise of love and meekness upon those Galatians in the recovery of those who had fallen, calleth them brethren, thereby expressing his love to them, and minding them of that love they ought to carry one to another, as being brethren; and designeth the person to be restored by the common name of a man, thereby pointing at the common frailty of mankind, to show his falling in sin is rather to be pitied than made a wonder of; and withal transferreth the guilt of the sin, in a great measure, from the person himself to the subtilty of Satan and violence of the temptation by which he was surprised and overtaken; every one whereof doth serve as a motive unto that pity and meekness unto which he exhorteth; "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault," saith he.

4. Though those who are so maliciously obstinate in sin, that lenity and meekness prevailleth nothing in order to their reclaiming, are to be

used with more severity and rigour, 1 Cor. iv. 21; yet others, concerning whom we have not ground in charity so to judge, but rather that they are surprised by the violence of some prevalent temptation, ought to be more gently dealt with: for they are only such, whom the apostle will have to be used with a spirit of meekness; "If a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one," &c.

5. So subtle and assiduous is Satan in tempting, 1 Pet. v. 8; so ready is corruption in us to close with a temptation so soon as it is presented, Eph. ii. 2; that if the child of God be not all the more circumspect and diligent, Matt. xxvi. 41, he cannot choose but be surprised, as it were unawares, by some one sin or other, and be thereby made to dishonour God, and to lay a stumbling-block before others: for Paul supposeth it as a thing incident unto all men to be thus surprised, while he saith, "If a man be overtaken in a fault."

6. Though it be the duty of all men to endeavour the reclaiming of those who are lying under unrepented guiltiness, (for the command is given unto all, Lev. xix. 17;) yet the more holy men are, and the further they have advanced in the ways of piety, they are the more obliged to go about this duty, chiefly because they are in a better capacity to discharge it; as being less tainted with sin than others, and so having more freedom to reprove; as also being more knowing how to go wisely about that difficile duty, and more willing to perform it than others, whose knowledge and love to God's glory and their neighbour's good, cometh short of theirs: for the apostle directeth this exhortation mainly to such as had received a greater measure of grace than others; "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one."

7. The greater store of graces and gifts a man hath received, he standeth the more obliged to lay out himself and all his receipts for the spiritual good and edification of others; providing always he move in his own sphere, and transgress not the bounds of his calling, Heb. v. 4; for Paul layeth this task of restoring the backslidden Christian chiefly upon those who had received a greater measure of grace and spiritual endowments than others; "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one."

8. As scandalous sins and erroneous opinions being fallen into by the child of God, do mar that orderly frame of the inward man which he did before enjoy, wasting the conscience and eating out the edge of all his former tenderness, 1 Pet. ii. 11; so the person who hath fallen in such sins, doth ordinarily prove backward to be reclaimed, and very ticklish to be meddled with by others for that end; as a man who hath a bone disjointed can hardly endure to have it touched. The word rendered "restore such an one," doth bear so much, as signifying to set in joint the dislocated members of the body, so that sin putteth the soul as it were out of joint.

9. As it is the duty of all, and especially of those who are spiritual, to endeavour the reclaiming of any who are so fallen, by admonition, Matt. xvii. 15, reproof, Lev. xix. 17, prayer to God on their behalf, James v. 14, 15, all which, and other

means in order to the same end, are to be gone about by private Christians by virtue of that tie which Christian charity, and their mutual relation one to another, arising from their being members of one body, do lay on : and by public ministers and church guides, by virtue of that authority wherewith Christ, the king of the church, hath invested them, Eph. iv. 11, 12 ; so in the use of all these means, every one is to carry himself with much skill and tenderness, if he would attain the proposed end ; for saith he, "Ye who are spiritual, restore such an one," or set him in joint again. It is a phrase borrowed from chirurgians, who, being to deal with a disjointed bone, will handle the same with skill and tenderness.

10. The grace of meekness whereby we moderate inordinate anger, and speedily repress revengeful passions, before they come to any great height, Eph. iv. 26, as it is the work of God's Spirit in us ; so the exercise of it is most necessary towards those who are fallen, and that all the means we use in order to their reclaiming be seasoned therewith, as being in nothing transported with the fury of rage and passion, but only acted with zeal to God, love to the person fallen, and with sanctified reason ; for thereby we evidence we are seeking the recovery of our brother, and not insulting over him ; we are labouring to help him, and not seeking to disgrace him ; for saith he, "Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness," or in meekness, whereof God's Spirit is the author.

11. There is no man, no, not the most spiritual, who can promise unto himself immunity from being set upon with strong temptations unto gross and scandalous evils, or that he shall stand when he is tempted, if he be left of God under the temptation ; for he biddeth even the spiritual man consider himself, "lest he also be tempted," whereby he holdeth forth not only a possibility that the spiritual man may be tempted, but also of his yielding to the temptation, when it should be presented, otherwise the argument had not been of such strength to enforce upon him the exercise of meekness towards those who are overtaken in a fault.

12. As those who do most rigidly and uncharitably censure the faults of others, are usually greatest strangers to their own hearts, and very little sensible of their own infirmities ; so the serious consideration of our own weakness, and how the root of our neighbours' sin, and of all other sin is in us, Rom. iii. 10—20 ; how we stand by grace, Psa. xciv. 18, and how, if God would suffer the tempter to break loose upon us, we should so much exceed the sins of others, as they exceed ours : the serious consideration, I say, of all those, though it should not bind us wholly up from reproving sin in others, yet it should cause us exceedingly to mix and temper our severity towards their sin with the exercise of meekness, pity, and compassion towards their person : for the apostle, to enforce the former exhortation of restoring their fallen brother in the spirit of meekness, doth enjoin, "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

13. So prone are we to entertain good thoughts of ourselves, that it is a matter of no small difficulty to make a man reflect upon himself, and

enter upon a serious consideration of his own frailty and weakness, and of every other thing which may keep him low in his own eyes, without insulting over, or despising of others, as appeareth from Paul's changing of the number ; for having said, "Ye who are spiritual, restore," &c., in the plural number ; here he saith, "considering thyself, lest thou also," &c., in the singular ; which he doth to give the greater force and sharper edge to his admonition, as knowing he was pressing a duty, which very hardly, and not without difficulty, would be obeyed.

VER. 2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

The apostle first enlargeth the former exhortation, both as to the persons exhorted, (for now he exhorteth not only those who are spiritual, but all of them,) and also as to the duty exhorted unto, which is extended not only to an endeavour of reclaiming those who were overtaken in a fault, but also, to the tolerating and bearing patiently with the sins and infirmities of others, until they be amended, and the sinner reclaimed ; which sins are designed by the name of a burden ; partly because some such sins are a burden and weight to the sinner himself, either by reason of his grief and sorrow for them, if he be a penitent, Acts ii. 37 ; or by reason of that vexation and trouble which some sins, as wrath, malice, and envy, do bring to the natural spirits even of the impenitent sinner, Job v. 2, Prov. xiv. 30 ; and partly because some such sins, though not felt by the sinner himself, are yet heavy burdens unto those who converse with him, as his curiosity, backbiting, self-seeking, and such like, Prov. xvi. 28. Secondly, he enforceth the exhortation thus enlarged, by a second argument, to wit, that hereby they did fulfil the law, or command of mutual love, which he calleth the law of Christ ; not as if love to our neighbour had not been enjoined before Christ came in the flesh ; for it is a prime piece of the law of nature, imprinted upon the heart of man at the creation, and was renewed again by God himself upon mount Sinai, 1 John i. 7. But because, first, Christ did renew this command, not only by freeing it from the false glosses and interpretations of Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. v. 23, &c., but also by pressing it in its spiritual beauty and nature, having laid aside and abolished the external cover of Mosaical ceremonies, Eph. ii. 15, under which it was veiled, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10 ; in which respect mainly it is here called the law of Christ, in opposition to the false apostles, who pressed so much the Mosaical law of ceremonies. And secondly, because Christ did press this law so renewed, in a singular manner upon his followers, as a mark of true faith in him, John xiii. 35 ; and thirdly, because Christ did fulfil this law in his own person, and thereby left an example of it unto us, 1 John iii. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there are none free of sinful infirmities, which are burdensome sometimes to themselves, and frequently unto others, so we ought not to break the bond of common society, which we

are otherwise tied unto, because of those; but are to persist in it, patiently bearing those infirmities which we cannot otherwise help; for, saith he, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

2. This duty of bearing with the infirmities of others, doth well consist with the use of such lawful means as God hath prescribed, whether to the magistrate for restraining sin, by punishing those who do evil, Rom. xiii. 4, or to ministers and private Christians, in order to the sinner's reclaiming by admonition, reproof, and such like; for this duty of "bearing one another's burdens," must agree with, and cannot be contrary unto, that other duty prescribed, ver. 1, which is to restore the sinner unto that state wherein he was, so far must we be from giving him countenance, or partaking with him in his sins.

3. A compassionate frame of spirit, made evident by our meek and patient deportment towards those who are overtaken in a fault, without neglecting any duty we owe unto them, doth afford the guilty sinner no small ease under his weighty exercise, and tendeth much both to his preservation from fainting under heartless discouragement, (if his conscience be touched with the sense of his guilt,) and to carry on the work of his conviction and amendment, (if he be yet going on securely in his sin;) for the apostle, having exhorted to such a meek and patient deportment towards those who are overtaken in a fault, he calleth it here a bearing of their burden, or an affording of help to them under it; "Bear ye one another's burdens."

4. There is no such evidence of love to our neighbour, as when it kytheth [showeth itself] in our serious endeavours for bringing about his spiritual good, and in taking the most effectual condescending and affectionate way in order to his reclaiming from sin, together with our supporting of him, and sympathising with him under his spiritual weights; for the apostle calleth this a fulfilling of the law of Christ, or of mutual love, as if that law did call for this only; "And so fulfil the law of Christ," saith he.

5. In what sense and measure the child of God doth attain to evidence his love to his fallen brother by his serious endeavours to restore him unto the enjoyment of God's favour, and to an holy and blameless conversation, and by his bearing with him under his infirmities, in order to his recovery, in that same sense and measure he attaineth to fulfil the law; whence it followeth, because he is not able to do the former perfectly, and so as to come short in nothing for matter or manner, Jam. iii. 2, but only sincerely, and without dissimulation, Rom. xii. 9, therefore neither can he keep the law perfectly, but only in sincerity, and in his honest aim and endeavour, Psa. cxix. 6; for, saith he, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

VER. 3. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

The apostle, in further prosecution of the former exhortation, doth fall upon the sin of

self-conceit and arrogancy, which causeth men contemn others, and carry themselves with a kind of supercilious disdain towards such as are overtaken in a fault, contrary to what he had exhorted them unto, ver. 1, 2. And, first, he tacitly dehortheth them from this vice, by showing the man who is puffed up with a conceit of his own endowments above others, and to the despising of others being compared with himself, doth deceive himself, and maketh his own mind to err in passing judgment of himself, (as the word doth signify,) and giveth a reason of this assertion, because every man, even the best, is nothing, as having no good in himself, and of himself, 2 Cor. iii. 5, for which he ought to be puffed up, and to despise others because of their infirmities.

DOCTRINES.

1. Then are duties pressed unto some good purpose by the Lord's ministers upon his people, when a discovery is made of those lurking evils which do withhold from the practice of those duties, and pains are taken to set them upon the task of subduing such evils, if they would come speed in the conscientious practice of the commanded duty; for Paul having exhorted to restore those who are fallen, and to bear one another's burden, he doth now dissuade them from the sin of self-conceit and arrogancy, as that which doth impede the practice of that duty; "If a man think himself to be something," saith he.

2. As it is ordinary for men to conceit too highly of themselves, whether by apprehending those excellences to be in themselves which really are not, Prov. xxvi. 16, or by overvaluing those excellences, parts, and other enjoyments, which they really have, above their just worth and esteem, Ezek. xxviii. 3, or by looking on them, not as receipts from the Lord, but only as they are their own, or the fruit of their own industry or purchase, Ezek. xxviii. 4, 5; so where this sin of self-conceit is fostered, it maketh the guilty person an insolent contemner of all others, a proud insulter over their infirmities, as taking occasion from those to conceive so much the more highly of himself; for this is the sin of a man's thinking himself to be something, which Paul supposeth to be a common evil, and speaketh against it, as that which maketh a man carry himself insolently towards others, especially those who are overtaken in a fault, as appeareth from the connexion, "If a man think himself to be something."

3. Error in judgment hath sometimes its rise from some unmortified and raging lust in the heart and affections, the prevalency whereof doth bias the understanding, and in progress of time doth unperceivably incline it to assent unto those opinions as truths which may most gratify those unmortified lusts; for, saith he, "He who thinketh himself something, deceiveth himself," or maketh his mind to err; for so the word significeth: importing hereby that those violent lusts of self-conceit, pride, and arrogancy, did make them apprehend some real worth to be where there was none, whereby they might have somewhat to feed upon.

4. For a man to be deceived by himself, is of

more dangerous consequence than to be deceived by any other, especially when a man deceiveth himself by having better thoughts of himself than there is ground or reason for; for hereby are men not only vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind, Col. ii. 18, but also made to cry peace, peace, when sudden destruction cometh, Matt. vii. 22, 23; for the apostle insinuateth there is no small hazard in self-deceiving, while he maketh this alone a sufficient argument to dissuade from self-conceit and arrogance, even that he "who thinketh himself to be something, deceiveth himself."

5. As every man considered in himself is nothing, being destitute of all good, Rom. vii. 18, yea, though he be considered in all his endowments both of nature and grace, yet he hath nothing for which he ought to conceit of himself and despise others; for what hath he which is not received? 1 Cor. iv. 7; yea, and what he must be accountable for, how he doth employ it, Luke xii. 48; so the serious consideration of this truth would be a singular engine to batter down those high mountains of self-conceit, which are ready to exalt themselves in a man's heart by reason of his apprehended or real excellences, gifts, or graces; for Paul maketh use of this consideration to convince them how vain any high thoughts of that kind were; "If any man seem to himself to be something, when he is nothing," saith he; which last sentence is spoken of all men generally, and serveth for an argument to prove that the self admirer is a self-deceiver, seeing every man is nothing.

VER. 4. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Secondly, the apostle striketh at one root and cause of self-conceit and arrogancy, to wit, our comparing ourselves with others who are worse than ourselves (for we may and ought compare with those who are better than ourselves, that so we may be humbled, 2 Cor. x. 12; but this comparing with those whom we esteem worse than ourselves, occasioneth self-conceit, Luke xviii. 11.) Now Paul taketh them off this way, exhorting them to prove and try their own work and carriage by the rule of God's word, without comparing it with the carriage of others, for so they behaved to try the work of others also; and that they would so prove their own work as to approve it, and find matter of approbation in it, if it were to be found, (for the Greek word rendered "prove," signifieth also to approve, as Rom. xiv. 22, 1 Cor. xvi. 3.) Which exhortation is enforced by two reasons; first, hereby they should find matter of such gloriation and boasting as God alloweth of, even in themselves alone, that is, in the testimony of a good conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12, and should not need to borrow matter of boasting from the sins of others, which the Lord doth no ways approve of, 1 Cor. v. 2.

DOCTRINES.

1. As a man who would set against a sin to purpose, and with success, must search out and set against every other sin which doth ordinarily

prove an occasion of that sin which he intendeth to subdue and mortify; so the minister of Christ, in the reproof of sin, ought to point forth unto the Lord's people those things which are the fuel and occasion of such and such sins, and press upon them an abstinence even from those: for the apostle, having dissuaded, ver. 3, from self-conceit, doth here point at the occasion of that sin, even their comparing themselves with others whom they judged worse than themselves, and dissuaded them from that also, while he saith, "But let every man prove his own work." 2. As it is the duty of every man without exception to reflect upon his own actions, and to take an exact trial of them by the touchstone of God's word, Psal. cxix. 9, not only if for the substance of the action they be commanded or warranted in his word, Isa. xxix. 13; but also, if they be done in the right manner, Luke viii. 18; that is, if they come from the root of a renewed heart, Matt. vii. 18, have their rise from right motives, Phil. i. 15, and be directed to the right end, God's glory in the first place, 1 Cor. x. 3, or not: so he ought not to rest satisfied with a simple probation and trial of his actions, except he find them to be such after trial, as he may upon just grounds approve them, and approve himself to God in them, 2 Tim. ii. 15, for, saith he, "Let every one prove," and so, as he may safely approve, "his own work," as the word signifieth; and such a probation must be here meant, otherwise the apostle's consequence should not follow upon a man's proving his work, even that he shall have rejoicing in himself.

3. Though civil magistrates and church-guides are to prove, even judicially, the work of others, who are committed to their charge, Rom. xiii. 3, 4, Tit. iii. 10, and though private Christians are also bound to prove all things by a judgment of Christian discretion, that so they may hold what is good, 1 Thess. v. 21, and be provoked unto love and good works, Heb. x. 23, but not that they may have whereat to carp, Psal. lvi. 5, 6, or whereby to be lifted up with an high and vain conceit of themselves above others, 1 Cor. v. 2, yet the great thing whereabout our most accurate and daily search and trial should be employed, is our own actions, and by proportion our own spiritual state, 2 Cor. xiii. 5, and frame of heart, Psal. xxvi. 2. Yea, those, and only those, are to be the object of our trial, when the end proposed in our trial is to find out matter of boasting in the testimony of a good conscience, and from which we may conclude, that we are approved of God: for this is the end of the trial here enjoined; and therefore, saith he, "Let every man prove his own works."

4. This work of self-trying and proving of our own work, being seriously and frequently gone about, would tend exceedingly not only to curb those lofty thoughts which we have of ourselves, but also to divert from those uncharitable, censorious, and base thoughts which we have of others, because of their infirmities and failings: for the apostle opposeth this duty as an antidote to that sin of self-conceit before reprov'd, and by consequence doth press it as an help to that duty of tenderness and compassion towards those who are overtaken in a fault enjoined, ver. 1, 2; "But," saith he, "let every man try his own work."

5. It is in some cases and respects lawful for men to glory and boast in themselves, or in the good things of God bestowed upon them, that is, not only to rejoice because of them, but also to express their joy, 2 Cor. i. 12, and to expect approbation and applause from men because of them, 2 Cor. xii. 11, providing they glory in them as evidences of God's love to them, and so as they may thereby assure their hearts before him of their interest in his favour and good will, 1 John iii. 19, and as endowments fitting them to serve God, by promoting his glory in their own salvation and their neighbours' good, and in every other duty which they are bound to in their station, 1 Cor. xv. 10, and as they are fitting occasions to incite themselves or others to give that glory to God which is due, Matt. v. 16, providing also that they glory in them (to wit, in so far as this gloriation importeth a seeking approbation to themselves) but sparingly, 2 Cor. xi. 16; and for the most part as of necessity and to maintain their uprightness before men, when it is unjustly called in question, 2 Cor. xii. 11, Job xxvii. 4, &c.; and that they be not puffed up with conceit of themselves, as if those good things did proceed from themselves alone, and not from God, 1 Cor. xv. 10; and that the approbation which they expect be not endeavoured as their furthest design, Matt. vi. 2, but as a mean of rendering them the more capable for promoting God's glory in their place and station, 1 Tim. iii. 7, and most especially, providing that they glory not in those things, as if thereby they could merit the favour of God and eternal life, which boasting is condemned, Rom. iv. 2. In these respects, and with these limitations it is lawful for men to glory in themselves: for the apostle speaketh of this way of glorying as an allowed consequence of a man's proving of his own work: "Then," saith he, "he shall have rejoicing (or boasting) in himself alone."

6. That a man may warrantably and upon good grounds thus rejoice in the good things of God bestowed upon him, especially so as thereby to assure his heart before God, it is not sufficient that he compare himself with others, and find himself to be better than those, but he must try himself by the rule of God's word, and after trial find himself approved by it; else his boasting is nought and vain, even a deceiving of himself: for the apostle, speaking of this warrantable gloriation and boasting, affirmeth it to be the consequence of a man's "proving his own work," and that it must be "in himself," and "not in another."

VER. 5. For every man shall bear his own burden.

Here is a second argument, enforcing upon every man the duty of trying his own work rather than to be narrowly prying into the infirmities of others; because every man must bear his own burden, or give an account of his own actions to God, Rom. xiv. 12; for the Lord will pass sentence upon men, whether by absolving or condemning them, not as they have been better or worse than others, but as they shall be found in themselves absolutely considered, and without any respect had unto others, see 1 Cor. iii. 8; which doth not militate against the tenor of the gospel, affirming

that believers shall be reckoned with by God, as they are clothed, not with their own righteousness, but with the unspotted righteousness of Christ their cautioner, Phil. iii. 9, for it is evident from the scope that the apostle excludeth only the infirmities of other sinful men, like unto ourselves, from being the rule according to which God will pass sentence, and not the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith.

DOCTRINES.

1. That a man may prove a happy interpreter of Scripture, and find out the mind of God's Spirit therein, it is necessary he do well understand the scope of the Spirit in that place, the sense whereof he intendeth to find out; the observing whereof will serve as a thread to conduct him in falling upon the genuine and literal meaning of the particular words and sentences, and will preserve him from making the Scripture in hand thwart or contradict any other part of sacred truth, which without observing of the scope he may readily fall in: for this verse seemeth at the first view to contradict that direction given, ver. 2, but the sense of both being collected from the scope, that seeming contrariety will vanish; for by "bearing one another's burdens," ver. 2, must be meant a bearing by way of sympathy, Christian forbearance, and diligent use of means for reclaiming the person fallen; for that is it which the apostle is pressing there, as appeareth from ver. 1, and in this sense every one ought to bear one another's burdens: but by "bearing our burden" in this verse, is meant a bearing by giving an account to God for our own actions, (otherwise it should not be a cogent argument to enforce the exhortation propounded, ver. 4: "Let every man prove his own work,") and in this sense "every man shall bear his own burden."

2. How light soever that men's sins do seem unto themselves when they are committed, yet they will be found not light, but heavy, when they come to reckon with God about them: for the giving an account of our actions to God goeth under the name of bearing a burden. "Every man shall bear his own burden."

3. So righteous is God, that he will call no man to an account for the sins of others, but only for his own, except he hath made those sins of others his own sins also by not doing his duty to impede the committing of them, Ezek. iii. 18, or by following of and walking in them, Exod. xx. 5, compared with Ezek. xviii. 14—17, or by not mourning to God for them, 1 Cor. v. 2, for, saith he, "every man shall bear his own burden."

4. It were our wisdom frequently to mind that great account which we must give to God, and to busy ourselves most in and about those things whereof he will crave an account of us: hence the apostle maketh this a reason why men should be most employed in proving their own work, and not in accurate prying into the carriage and infirmities of others, because it was their own work, whereof they behoved to give an account to God: "For every man shall bear his own burden," saith he.

VER. 6. Let him that is taught in the word

communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

In the second place, the apostle exhorteth them unto beneficence, which may be looked upon as another piece of that serving one another through love, enjoined chap. v. 13, and because love to the word growing cold among those Galatians, by reason of their schism and the prevalence of error, it is probable that the due respect which they did owe to their ministers, was much decayed, except to such only as were of their own faction and way, therefore, in the first place, he exhorteth unto beneficence towards their ministers, directing his speech to those who were catechised, that is, taught familiarly by word of mouth, as when children are taught the first principles of religion; for so the word, rendered "is taught," doth signify: or, more generally (as the word is here rendered, and taken elsewhere, 1 Cor. xiv. 19; Rom. ii. 18,) those who are instructed, or taught, whether more familiarly and plainly, or more profoundly in the word, whereby may be meant either the word of God in general, or of the gospel in particular, which frequently is called the word by way of excellency, (see upon Phil. i. 14, Doct. 1.) Those he exhorteth to communicate, and to give a share unto their ministers of all their temporal goods, to wit, so much as might serve for their creditable maintenance.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord Christ hath appointed two distinct ranks and sorts of people to be in his visible church, some who are to be taught, fed, ruled and watched over, such are all private church members; and some who are to be teachers, pastors, guides and watchmen over the flock by virtue of their public office in the house of God, the honour whereof is not to be taken by any man unto himself, except he be called as Aaron, Heb. v. 4, and are all teachers, 1 Cor. xii. 29; "Let him that is taught communicate unto him that teacheth."

2. As it was necessary that some should be teachers in the house of God, so the wisdom of God hath thought it fit, because of our weakness, (Deut. v. 23, &c.) to teach us not by his own immediate voice from heaven, nor yet by glorious angels, but by the ministry of men like unto ourselves, and those not usually of the greatest sort, but of such as stand in need of the people's benevolence for their worldly subsistence, and this that the glory of converting souls may be ascribed not unto creatures, but unto God, 2 Cor. iv. 7; for so much is imported, while he saith, "Let him that is taught communicate unto him that teacheth."

3. As it is the duty of Christ's ministers to teach and instruct the Lord's people, not so much by their writings, as by vocal preaching and word of mouth; so the thing wherein they are to be instructed is the knowledge not of human writings, but of the word of God contained in Scripture; there being no word or writing besides which hath a promise of such a blessing to accompany it, as this word hath, (see Rom. i. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 15—17; Heb. iv. 12;) for, saith he,

"Let him that is taught (or instructed by word of mouth) in the word," meaning the written word of God.

4. Seeing Christ's ministers are to bestow themselves wholly in the work of the ministry, 1 Tim. iv. 15, and not to be entangled with the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. ii. 4, and seeing they are the Lord's instruments, by whom he conveyeth the richest blessings, even those which are spiritual, unto his people, 1 Cor. ix. 11; therefore the people of God among whom they spend their strength, are bound even by common equity to give them worldly maintenance, that they may neither be diverted from nor discouraged in that most necessary and painful work of watching over souls, Heb. xiii. 17; for, saith he, "Let him that is taught communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

5. This worldly maintenance, which people are bound to give unto their ministers, though it should be moderate, and such as may not through its abundance occasion pride, luxury, and prodigality in their ministers; yet it would be liberal, and creditable, even such as may not only supply their pinching necessities, but also as thereby they may be sustained in a way creditable unto the gospel whereof they are ministers, 1 Tim. v. 17, and may have wherewith to supply the necessities of the indigent, 1 Tim. iii. 2, and to educate their children, so as afterwards they may sustain themselves, and be profitable members both of church and commonwealth, 1 Tim. v. 8, for he commandeth the people "to communicate to their ministers in all their temporal good things;" he saith, "in all," and therefore liberally, though not lavishly.

6. Though the civil magistrate be obliged to provide some set and public allowance for upholding the gospel and ministry thereof; this way coming nearer to the order appointed by God for maintaining the priesthood under the law, Numb. xxxv. 1, &c., and being free of several inconveniences which can hardly be avoided in the way of giving voluntary contribution by every one who heareth the gospel towards those who preach the same: yet, in case the magistrate provide not such public allowance for them, or, if turning persecutor, he take that which is already provided by the law for that use from them, then it is the duty of every one who is taught in the word to maintain their preachers by liberal contribution out of their own means, so far as is necessary for him that receiveth, and as he is able to spare who giveth: for this was the case of the church in Paul's time, being under persecuting tyrants; and therefore he commandeth, "Let him that is taught communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

7. The church's maintenance is only due unto such ministers as have abilities to preach the gospel, and are faithful and diligent labourers in the word, according to those abilities wherewith they are endued; and therefore, though private men are not hereby warranted to withdraw the ordinary and allowed maintenance from their ministers upon pretence that they are either not able, or not painful, Matt. xxiii. 2, 3; yet it concerneth those whom Christ hath intrusted to be overseers of his house, to be careful that such

who are either really unfit, or unwilling to preach, be removed from their charge, and not suffered to eat up the church's maintenance, feeding themselves, and starving the souls of people committed to their charge: therefore the apostle, while he pleadeth for maintenance to a minister, doth describe him from the actual exercise of his calling, "Let him communicate to him that teacheth."

VER. 7. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

The apostle, supposing that those who were averse from the duty of beneficence to their ministers, did colour their own avarice and naughtiness with a number of seemingly plausible excuses taken from their pretended indigence, multiplicity of other burdens, and such like, he speaketh to such witty cheaters as these in this verse, desiring them to advert, that though they might stop the mouths of their honest-hearted ministers, (as not knowing how, or not being willing to contradict them in what they affirmed,) and might mock them for their simplicity afterwards; yet they had another party to deal with in this matter, even God himself, who would not be deceived, or mocked with their lying pretences and excuses, and forbiddeth them to deceive or flatter themselves by thinking otherwise; and so proceedeth to press the duty of beneficence towards ministers, by an argument expressed in a similitude taken from sowers of seed, who may expect an increase in the time of reaping according to what they have sown, whether it be much seed, or little, good seed or bad: so accordingly as men's actions are, whether good or bad, (which are compared to seed, Prov. xi. 18, and xxii. 8,) and more particularly as they employ their temporal goods, (the employing whereof is also compared unto sowing, 2 Cor. ix. 6,) whether for good and pious uses, or for pampering their fleshly lusts, (as he brancheth forth this sowing in the following eighth verse,) so they might expect an answerable reward, or punishment from the Lord, to wit, either here, or hereafter; for thus is the same similitude expounded, 2 Cor. ix. 6—8.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the sin of backwardness in people to bestow any thing for upholding the gospel in the public ministry thereof, is very common, and hath begun early in the Christian church; so the minister of Christ may not, upon pretence of modesty, as being unwilling to kyth [appear] much in that wherein his particular advantage is any way concerned, suffer this sin to go unreprieved more than others; seeing it tendeth so much to the gospel's prejudice, and that it is excess of modesty which impedeth the practice of a necessary duty: for Paul observing this sin to have been too common, even in his time, doth sharply admonish and rebuke those who were guilty of it, while he saith, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."

2. Neglecters of duty, and chiefly of expensive duties, such as is that of giving competent main-

tenance to the ministry, are very quick and witty to find out pretences and excuses to colour their sin, and so to seal the eyes of those whom they have to do with; and this all, that they may enjoy the profit of sin, and yet eschew the shame and imputation of it before men: for Paul doth here meet with such witty excuses, and with those who made use of them; "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."

3. Though God be always the sinner's party, whatever sin he doth commit, Psa. li. 4; yet, seeing ministers are Christ's ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20, and that the contemning or discouraging of them by withholding competent maintenance from them doth so directly tend to the utter overthrow of religion and decay of all public worship; therefore he is in a singular manner party, and will kyth [show] himself to be so unto all who are guilty of so doing: for the apostle representeth the Lord as the party whom they had to deal with, while he saith, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."

4. Though subtle wits may so excuse their sin, as thereby to cast such a blind before the eyes of men, as they will hold them innocent, or at least cannot know how to fasten guilt upon them; yet the all-seeing eye of God cannot be so sealed: he knoweth the thoughts afar off, Psa. cxxxix. 2, and discerneth the very intents of hearts, Heb. iv. 12, and therefore cannot be set off with plausible pretences: for it is in this respect he saith, "God is not mocked," as they mocked men by making them give credit unto their lying excuses."

5. Then doth a man most dangerously deceive himself, when he resteth satisfied with this, that he hath conveyed his fraudulent and covetous practices so handsomely that men shall find nothing for which to blame him, as if, because short-sighted man cannot find him out, that therefore he shall escape the accurate search of the all-seeing God; for the apostle affirmeth they would be deceived, if they did entertain any such thoughts of God; "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."

6. Though men do usually give all that for lost which they bestow for maintaining the gospel, and for pious uses: yet it is not so, but shall be returned unto them in God's appointed time with increase, if not in things of the same kind, yet in things equivalent to, and better than those: for so much doth his comparing beneficence of this kind to the seed sown import; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

7. The reward which God hath freely promised unto the good works of his people, and more particularly unto their cheerful, liberal, and Christian beneficence, is not to be despaired of: nor yet the justly deserved judgment denounced against the wicked for their evil works, and chiefly for their niggardly withholding a part of what God hath given unto them from charitable and pious uses, is to be doubted of, though both of them be long deferred: for both the promised reward and threatened judgment are compared to the reaping of the harvest, which doth most certainly, though not immediately, follow upon the sowing of the seed; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

8. As the faith of a reward to be freely given, according to the promise, unto our works of charity and beneficence, is a strong encouragement to fruitfulness in works of that kind; so it is lawful for Christians to have an eye to this reward, as a motive whereby to work up their backward hearts unto a willing compliance with expensive duties of that sort: providing, first, it be not looked at as a thing to be merited by their good works, Rom. vi. 23; nor, secondly, as the only or chief motive, 2 Cor. v. 14; for the apostle by this similitude doth mind them of the promised reward, as an argument exciting them unto beneficence; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

VER. 8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

What the apostle spoke generally concerning that proportion which shall be betwixt a man's future reward, and his present work, he doth now, following the same metaphor of sowing and reaping, make it more clear by distinguishing several sort of sowers, seeds, grounds, and several sorts of harvests answerable to each of those: the plain meaning whereof is, 1. That carnal and unregenerate men, who take no other care but to spend their wit, strength, time, and particularly their means upon the service of their own fleshly lusts, (such as are reckoned forth, chap. v. 19, 20,) they shall at least reap no fruit thereby but corruption, that is, eternal perdition; (for corruption is here opposed unto eternal life;) and this they shall reap from the flesh, that is, their own inbred corruption, which, with the sinful effects thereof, is the true seed of death and perdition. And, secondly, that renewed and spiritual men, who employ their whole life, study, and labour, and particularly their worldly substance for advancing the works of the Spirit, whether in themselves or others, (such as are reckoned forth, chap. v. 22,) and particularly, for upholding the gospel and a painful ministry, they shall receive the reward of eternal life; and this from the Spirit, that is, the grace of God in them, which is the true seed of eternity, not by way of merit, as destruction and corruption follow upon the flesh, but from God's merey and free gift, as the apostle doth in plain and proper terms put the difference, Rom. vi. 23, according to which this metaphoric allegory must be expounded, and may not be set in opposition to it.

DOCTRINES.

1. The whole world are comprised in one of two ranks: they are either sowing to the flesh, living in their unregenerate state, and in slavery to their lusts, whose end shall be perdition; or, they are sowing to the Spirit, truly regenerate, and employing themselves for the advancing of things spiritual, whose end shall be eternal life; there is no neutral or midstate: for Paul distinguisheth all in these two, "He that soweth to his flesh, and he that soweth to the Spirit."

2. It may be frequently observed, that they

who have not an heart to part with any thing of their temporal goods for God and pious uses, but plead present poverty, necessity, and fear of future want, when God doth call them to any thing of that kind, are notwithstanding most profuse and lavish in spending their means to make provision for the flesh, and to uphold the beastly lusts thereof; for he "that soweth not to the Spirit, soweth to his flesh."

3. Though carnal men do think their own way the only wisest, while they spend their wit and substance for attaining present profit, pleasure, and preferment, and do judge the way of the godly but mere folly, while they employ their strength and means for things spiritual, and such as God's honour is mainly concerned in, and are not attended with an income of worldly advantage, but rather of loss and detriment; yet the end shall prove, that those who thought themselves only wise men and gainers, have been but mere fools and greatest losers, and that those others, whom they looked upon as madmen and bad managers of their worldly affairs, have been the greatest gainers and wisest adventurers; for he "that soweth to his flesh, shall reap corruption;" but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall reap life everlasting."

4. The state of the wicked after death, is a state of corruption, wherein though the substance of their soul and body shall not be annihilated, but shall be upheld unto all eternity by the mighty power of God in the midst of unutterable torments, Mark ix. 44; yet all their glory, pleasure, and gain wherein they placed their happiness, and for attaining whereof only they spent their time and strength, Psal. xlix. 11, shall then be consumed, 2 Pet. iii. 10, and they themselves made to languish and pine away under the wrath of a highly provoked and then unreasoning God, 2 Thess. i. 9; for saith he, "The wicked shall reap corruption," meaning their state after death.

5. The state of the godly after death shall be a state of life, the life of grace being then swallowed up and perfected in the life of glory, which consisteth in perfect freedom from sin and misery, Eph. v. 27, in unconceivable joys, Psal. xvi. 11, and the full enjoying of God, 1 John iii. 2; which happy state of theirs shall be eternal, they shall never weary nor yet be deprived of it: for, saith he, the godly "shall reap life everlasting."

6. Whatever sin a man committeth, it is most properly his own work, as flowing from the root of his own corrupt flesh; but the good which he doth, is not so properly his own as God's, in so far as it floweth from the Spirit of God, and habits of grace which were wrought in him by the self-same Spirit, Phil. ii. 13, Col. iii. 10; for speaking of the flesh, he setteth it forth by the appropriating pronoun his; "He that soweth to his flesh;" but not so, while he speaketh of the Spirit, "He that soweth to the Spirit," not to his Spirit.

VER. 9. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

The apostle, from what he hath presently

spoken of the reward of eternal life, attending those who sow in the Spirit, inferreth the former exhortation, propounded ver. 6, and enlargeth it, by recommending unto them, according to the sense given of the former similitude, the study of good works, and especially of beneficency in the general, under the name of well-doing; whereby he meaneth not only the outward work, but also the doing of it in a right manner, Matt. vi. 1, &c.; and that they would persevere to the end in that study, notwithstanding of all contrary discouragements, without base and cowardly ceding unto them; and enforceth the exhortation by putting it above all question, that they shall gather the fruit which God had promised, though not presently, yet in the "due time," that is, the time which God doth judge most convenient; but withal, he addeth a condition of reaping in due time, required on their part, to wit, if they continued constant in well-doing, even the same unto which he had exhorted them in the former part of the verse.

DOCTRINES.

1. As all men by nature are exceedingly backward from entering the course of well-doing, and especially of exercising beneficency towards those whom God hath ordained to be objects of it, Mark x. 21—23, so considering the many discouragements which occur to a man while he is in this course of beneficency, what from his own corruption, what from the unworthiness, ingratitude, and multitude of objects, and what from the coldrife disposition and bad example of others, who are equally if not more able, there is no small propensity in all to sit up in that course, and to give it over immediately, or soon after they have entered it: for Paul supposeth such a propensity, and guardeth against it, while he saith, "Let us not be weary of well-doing."

2. It is not enough that men do so far subject themselves to the authority of God speaking in his word, as once to enter the way of obedience, and to endure for a season, Mark iv. 17, until possibly they attain to a name for piety, Rev. iii. 1, or meet with some unexpected discouragement or temptation, Mark iv. 17; but, they must also persist in their begun course so long as they have any being, Psal. civ. 33, for, saith he, "Let us not be weary in well-doing."

3. That Christians may eye the promised reward, and with what provisions they may have their eye upon it, as a motive to obedience and perseverance; (see ver. 7, Doct. 8,) for the Spirit of God doth encourage them from this, "that in due time they should reap."

4. Though God hath promised a rich reward from free-grace unto his people's sincere and willing obedience; yet, he hath reserved the date and time for the actual bestowing of that reward unto himself; so, that though it be long delayed, yet they have not ground to challenge him for breach of promise, as sometimes even his dearest saints under a violent temptation have gone very near to do, Psal. lxxvii. 8; for, saith he, "Ye shall reap," but when? not presently, but "in the due" and proper "time," to wit, that which God doth judge to be such.

5. Though God, as said is, doth not limit him-

self to a determinate time when he will make his people enjoy the wished-for fruits and comfort of their laborious, expensive, and long persisted-in obedience; yet the time made choice of by him for his so doing, whether in this life, or immediately after death, is always the due and proper time, and hath a fitness in it in some respects, all circumstances being well considered, for the bestowing of that mercy beyond any other time: for, he saith, "Ye shall reap in due" or proper, "time;" the word rendered time, signifieth properly an opportune time, the very article or point of time which determineth the fittest opportunity for doing any business; and the epithet added doth intend the signification, as if he had said, an "opportune opportune time," or "most opportune time."

6. That a man may upon just grounds, and with confidence expect the good thing offered and contained in a conditional promise, he must of necessity come up in his practice to that condition and qualification which is called for in the promise; hence the apostle exhorteth them not to weary, because the promise of a reward includeth their not wearying as a condition; "Ye shall reap, if ye faint not:" where by fainting we must not understand every slackening and remitting somewhat in our course; for this befalleth sometimes the choicest saints of God, Psal. lxxiii. 2, &c. but such a fainting as maketh the fainter totally and finally abandon the ways of God, which is not incident to the real child of God, Matt. xxiv. 24.

VER. 10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

He doth yet again repeat, and so closeth the former exhortation unto beneficency, as a conclusion drawn from the former arguments; and first, he presseth the use-making of the present opportunity which they had of exercising this grace, which relateth, 1. mainly to the whole time of this life, as that which being ended, all opportunity of doing good by those, who did ever until then neglect to do good, doth end with it. And, 2, to some parts of that time, in which there is more ready access unto duties of that kind, than at other times. And secondly, he sheweth the persons unto whom they should do good, first, to all men whomsoever; next and especially unto those who, being conjoined by the tie of one common confession of faith in Jesus Christ, are members of his church, which is as it were his household, 1 Tim. iii. 15.

DOCTRINES.

1. The minister of Christ who would speak pertinently and edifyingly unto his hearers, must not hand-over-head deliver every truth as it cometh to his mind without any method, or dependence of purposes; but, having such a scope proposed unto himself to aim at, whether the illustration and confirmation of a truth, or the enforcing of a duty, or the reproving of sin, or confutation of error, he would digest in his mind,

and accordingly deliver in preaching all his other purpose, so as it may be best subservient unto that scope, whether as illustrations, confirmations from Scripture and reason, or as motives, helps, cautions, or arguments, &c. Yea, and for the better help of people's memory, and better carrying along of their attention, with the thread of his whole discourse, he would frequently inculcate and re-assume that which is principally intended by him in his discourse, and to which all the other pieces of it are subservient: for so doth the apostle propose, ver. 6, the enforcing of beneficency, as the scope he aimeth at, making all he hath said in the following verses one way or other subservient unto it, and doth frequently reiterate the exhortation itself, ver. 6, ver. 9, and here, "As we have opportunity, let us do good."

2. The servants of Jesus Christ should so press the duties of beneficency upon others, as not to exoner and keep themselves free from that duty, who ought to be examples unto the Lord's people, as in every duty, so chiefly in those of beneficency, 1 Tim. iv. 12; because people being more averse from such expensive duties than from any other, do more readily snatch at every thing which may excuse their neglect, and will judge no excuse more plausible than that even their ministers do neglect all duties of that kind; therefore the apostle, both in the former verse and in this, includeth himself in the exhortation; "Let us not weary," and, "let us do good," saith he.

3. As there are some fit opportunities offered unto us by the providence of God for doing our duty in any kind, and especially for this duty of beneficency, such as our meeting with convenient objects, whose necessity calls for our help, Isa. lviii. 7, and our being fitted with abilities to do them good, 2 Cor. viii. 14, so because those opportunities are in passing, and being past, will not possibly return, therefore are we to look upon them as a pressing call from the Lord to set about the duty, and ought, without delay or foreflowing, close with that call: for all this is imported by saying, "As we have opportunity, let us do good," seeing, as we show, this opportunity relateth in part to some pieces of our time in this life, in which we have more ready access to the duties of beneficency than at other times, and it hath the force of an argument to press the duty, as supposing it will not always last.

4. As all opportunities of this kind are confined within the narrow precinct of this present life, there being no possibility of doing good in the way which we now do it, or of being beneficial unto others after this life, the time of repentance, of making sure our election by well-doing, of making our peace with God, is then past, and where the tree falleth there it lieth, Eccles. xi. 8; so, because the time of this life is uncertain, James iv. 14, therefore we ought to bestir ourselves in the use-making of the present time, as not knowing how soon our time may end, and all opportunity of doing good come to an end with it: for so much is imported in the words, as this opportunity doth hold out the whole time of this life; "As," or, "while we have opportunity, let us do good."

5. This duty of beneficency is to be extended

unto all men, even our very enemies not excepted, as their necessity doth require, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5, and our own ability may furnish, 2 Cor. viii. 12, and that because of God's own example, Matt. v. 45, and the tie of one common nature betwixt them and us, Isa. lviii. 7; for, saith he, "Let us do good unto all men."

6. As the church is God's family and household, whereof he himself is the head and master, Eph. iii. 15, his ministers are stewards, to dispense the bread of life, 1 Cor. iv. 1, and particular Christians are members of this family, orderly conjoined, and knit together by the profession of one common faith in Christ Jesus; and therefore the church is but a small number, a family, even an handful in comparison of the world, Luke xii. 32. And being Christ's family, cannot but be cared and provided for by him, 1 Tim. v. 8, so the members of this family are in a special manner obliged to love one another, and to evidence their love by being beneficial one to another under their necessities and straits, (in which God doth suffer often even those of his own family to fall for their own good, 1 Pet. i. 6); and that as for other reasons, so because of that near relation under which they stand, as being children and domestics of one family which is the Lord's: for, saith he, "Do good especially unto them who are of the household of faith," the designation which he giveth them of one household containing the force of an argument.

7. There is an order to be kept in the exercise of our beneficency; and this, first, that it be exercised to those of our own family, 1 Tim. v. 8; secondly, to our parents, 1 Tim. v. 4; thirdly, to our kindred, 1 Tim. v. 8; and, fourthly, among strangers, unto those who profess the same faith with us, and among those, to such who do evidence most the reality of their faith by the fruits of a good life, 1 Tim. v. 9, 10; and lastly, unto all men whosoever when occasion offereth: for the apostle doth express the two last links of this order, and thereby giveth ground for searching out the rest from other Scriptures; "Do good unto all men, but especially to them which are of the household of faith;" he saith, "especially," because the comparison is among those who are strangers, and not under any relation of kindred to us.

VER. 11. Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

The apostle, in the second part of the chapter, being to conclude the epistle, doth first insinuate how much he truly loved them, and desired their salvation, as it appeareth, first, from his writing so large a letter to them: secondly, from his writing of it with his own hand, whether because his straits were such that he had not a secretary to write for him, whom he might trust; or that he might hereby prevent the calumnies of the false apostles who might have objected that this epistle was not Paul's, if he had employed a secretary or scribe, as he did in writing his other epistles, Rom. xvi. 22, subscribing the salutation only with his own hand, 1 Cor. xvi. 21, 2 Thess. iii. 17; so that though he wrote larger epistles to some other churches, yet he never wrote with his

own hand so large an epistle unto any church as unto these Galatians.

DOCTRINES.

1. The minister of Jesus Christ ought to refuse no toil or pains whereby he may reduce a straying people, and any way advance the good of souls committed to his charge: for Paul, in order to the reclaiming of those Galatians, notwithstanding of his other manifold distractions, and of the imminent hazard wherein he was for the time, doth undergo the great trouble of writing "so large a letter with his own hand."

2. It is nothing contrary to Christian modesty and sobriety, but very lawful in itself, and advantageous for the Lord's people, that a minister make known unto them sometimes (though but sparingly, and as it were occasionally) what great pains he hath been at for bringing about their spiritual good, providing this be not done from ostentation and desire of vain glory, 2 Cor. x. 18; but from a purpose hereby to excite the people to bring forth fruits answerable to his pains: for in order to this end, the apostle doth modestly, and as it were on the by, propound to their consideration what pains he had been at in writing this epistle; "Ye see," or, "consider ye, (for the word will read both ways,) how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."

3. The greater pains are taken upon a people in order to their salvation by Christ's ministers, they ought to be the more persuaded of their affection and love, and take the greater pains in making use of the labours of such ministers, for working out their own salvation themselves; otherwise the more laborious ministers are, the more inexcusable shall people be, and their condemnation the greater, Matt. xi. 22; for the apostle, to persuade the Galatians how much he loved them, and that they might be excited to bring forth fruits answerable to his pains, doth show "how large a letter he had written unto them with his own hand."

VER. 12. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Secondly, in the conclusion of the epistle, the apostle insinuateth that the false apostles were not acted from love to those Galatians in their so much urging circumcision upon them, as a thing without the which they could not be saved, whereby they laid upon them a kind of necessity, and constrained them to be circumcised, and sheweth three principles from which they did herein act, two whereof are in this verse; first, from hypocrisy, or a desire to make a fair outward show of religion by observing those fleshly and carnal rites, such as circumcision, difference of meats, legal purifications, and the like, enjoined by the ceremonial law. Secondly, from pusillanimity, or a politic design to eschew persecution from their countrymen the Jews, Acts xviii. 12, 13, for preaching the sincere doctrine of the gospel concerning Christ crucified, which is here called

the cross of Christ, see chap. v. ver. 11; the fury of which persecutors was much abated towards such Christians as did observe the ceremonial law of Moses, the preaching down whereof, of any other thing, did enrage them most, chap. v. 11.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though an external profession of religion, Rom. x. 10, and the practice of such external rites, 1 Cor. xi. 24, and other ordinances of divine worship as God hath commanded, Col. iii. 16, are to be made conscience of; yet, when the practice of those external things is opposed to the inward substantial duties of religion, the former being rested upon without the latter, Matt. xv. 8; or when the practiser affecteth a vain show, and to be reputed religious because of those things, much more than to be religious really and indeed, Matt. vi. 16; this is the sin of hypocrisy, loathsome both to God and man; and that especially when people affect a show from the practice of those rites which are not commanded of God: for this is condemned here in the false apostles, that they desired to seem exceedingly religious, and to make a fair outward show of religion by observing such carnal rites as God had now abolished under the gospel; "As many as make a fair show in the flesh," saith he.

2. It is ordinarily observed, that the zeal of those who are carried away with the spirit of error themselves, and whose great work is to seduce others, doth most run out upon the externals of religion, thereby affecting a fair show, and to be reputed as men singular for piety and devotion; that so they may deceive the simple, who take all for gold that glittereth, Rom. xvi. 18; so those apostles "desired to make a fair show in the flesh."

3. An erring conscience is of great force, and mightily prevalent with erring persons to make them to follow the dictates thereof; it being usual for such to pretend conscience as a reason why they cannot subject themselves to truth, God in his holy justice doth give them over to a spirit of delusion, 2 Thess. ii. 11; and maketh conscience to be their snare, when it embraceth darkness for light, Isa. v. 20; and incessantly vexeth them until they execute its most unreasonable, irreligious, unnatural, and sometimes most blasphemous commands, John xvi. 2, Jer. xxxii. 35; for the false apostles did "constrain them to be circumcised," mainly, because by teaching the absolute necessity of circumcision to salvation, Acts xv. 2, they possessed their consciences with that erroneous opinion, and their consciences so misled, did constrain them to follow its dictates.

4. As persecution doth ordinarily follow upon the sincere preaching of the gospel; so when persecution for the gospel waxeth hot, there are usually many found, who, to decline a suffering lot, do tamper with the persecutors of truth, though not by total apostasy from truth, yet by coming a great length in making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, only to gratify those who persecute the truth, and to break the edge of their rage and fury against themselves; who,

notwithstanding, will labour to keep up their credit in the church of God, as if they were acted from no such politic design, but from a principle of light and conscience; for so those false apostles "constrained others to be circumcised," pretending conscience for their so doing, when their design was, "only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

5. Though heretics, and every one who are carried away with a spirit of error, pretend to conscience, as that which they desire to follow, and dare not contradict in what they hold; yet very frequently such, especially they who are seducers of others, do but make a pretext and shelter of conscience to cover their pride, politic designs, love to ease in a troublesome time, pusillanimity of spirit, fear of persecution, and a desire of vain glory, by which they are acted more than from any principle of conscience; for those false apostles pretended to light and conscience, as the rule of what they did, Acts xv. 2; and yet they did it only, saith Paul, "lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;" and ver. 13, "That they may glory in your flesh."

6. However, they who persecute others for truth do also pretend to conscience, Isa. lxvi. 5; yet they are often found to be men destitute of conscience, and more politic than conscientious, even in those things wherein they pretend most to conscience, in so far as they do dispense with some professors of truth, if so they come but a little towards them, and comply with them in some things only, though not in all things, as intending hereby to work them up to a greater length in progress of time: for so the persecuting Jews did not molest those Christians who were circumcised; though they did otherwise profess faith in the Messiah already come, whom the Jews had crucified, as is clear from this, "They constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

7. As a desire to eschew a suffering lot and persecution even for truth by all lawful means, is no ways sinful, but commanded, Matt. x. 23, and commendable, Prov. xxii. 3; so to dispense with the least jot of truth, and to embrace the smallest of errors contrary to truth, that hereby the greatest of sufferings might be eschewed, is blameworthy and extremely sinful, seeing the least of sins hath more of evil in it than the greatest of sufferings. Those are our affliction, but not our sin; for the apostle condemneth his adversaries, not that simply they had laboured to eschew persecution, but that they "constrained others to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

VER. 13. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

The apostle first maketh good his former charge against his adversaries, to wit, that they urged circumcision not from zeal to the law of God, and from conscience, but from a politic base design; because they made no conscience to keep

the law themselves, that is, neither the moral law which they transgressed daily by their wicked and licentious lives, Phil. iii. 18, 19, nor yet the ceremonial law, the keeping whereof they urged so much upon others, but did usually and without challenge neglect it among themselves, and where they knew none were to publish it abroad, Matt. xxiii. 4; secondly, he mentioneth the third principle from which they were acted in their so vehement urging of circumcision upon others, even their ambition and desire of vain glory, that they might have whereof to glory and boast in the multitude of proselytes among the Gentiles, who received circumcision in their flesh at their instigation, and thereby did evidence that they were converted, or rather perverted unto Judaism.

DOCTRINES.

1. As we would not lightly, and without evident cause, charge any with hypocrisy, dissimulation, and pretending of zeal for God, and respect to conscience, when there is no such thing in reality and truth; so this is ground sufficient for any to suspect, and for those who are otherwise called unto it, to affirm that they who give little or no evidence of zeal to God, or respect to conscience in the ordinary strain of their conversation, are not acted from zeal and conscience in those particulars wherein they would seem most zealous and conscientious; and more especially, when ministers do make bold without challenge to neglect those things, the practice whereof they press most vehemently upon others, it crieth aloud that they are men destitute of conscience, and that they speak and preach, not because they believe, but for other base ends; for Paul having charged his adversaries with hypocrisy in their so much urging of circumcision, ver. 12, he giveth a reason for so doing, to wit, their godless conversation and careless neglect of those things which they so much pressed upon others; "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law."

2. The word of God in the mouths of his servants, is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, so as it entereth in upon a man's very soul and spirit, and maketh that difference appear which is betwixt his false though fair pretences, and his real, though foul intentions, the latter whereof lay lurking under the former; but this searching word taketh off the visor, and maketh them appear in their foulest colours: for the word of God in Paul's mouth, discovereth the secret foul intent even of the very hearts of his adversaries, having laid aside their fair pretexes; "They desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh," saith he.

3. Where the spirit of schism and church-rending hath once possessed a soul, it causeth the man in whom it is to refuse no pains, trouble, or toil, for gaining of many followers, and to look upon those whom he so gaineth as so many trophies of his victory, and speaking proofs of his unparalleled abilities and parts, wherewith he is so much taken up himself that he cannot dissemble his earnest desire to have all others taken up with admiration at them also: for those

schismatic church-readers, chap. iv. ver. 17, did desire, yea, ver. 12, "constrained men to be circumcised, that they might glory in their flesh."

VER. 14. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Thirdly, in the conclusion, the apostle doth oppose his own truly Christian and apostolic conversation and carriage to those sins of hypocrisy, carnal policy, and vain glory, which he hath shewn to be in the false apostles: and, first, in opposition to their vain glory, mentioned ver. 13, he declareth that the matter of his gloriation and boasting was only in the cross of Christ, that is, the all-sufficient, expiatory, and satisfactory sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, with the whole work of our redemption, which is also hereby synecdochically understood, and rejecteth all other sorts of boasting, as a thing abominable; for so much doth his usual expression, "God forbid," import, Rom. iii. 4, 6, 31; and vi. 2. Secondly, he sheweth, in opposition to their hypocrisy and desire to make a fair show in the flesh, that by Christ, or by his cross, (for the article in the Greek language may relate to either,) the world was crucified to him, that is, all that is in the world, and in so far as it is opposed to the kingdom of Christ, as honour, riches, pomp, pleasure, the favour, fear, wrath, praise or dispraise of men, all were undervalued and despised by him, to wit, in comparison of Christ and the excellency and worth of his sufferings, Philip. iii. 8: and hereby also he was crucified unto the world, that is, undervalued and despised by the men of this world; for to be crucified, in both sentences, signifieth the same thing, even to be contemptible and undervalued, as those were who died by that ignominious and cursed death upon the cross, Deut. xxi. 23.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is praiseworthy in a minister, and advanceeth much the conviction of those whose sins he reproveth, when his own carriage is so exemplary, as the holding forth of it may point out their duty, and wherein they come short of their duty: for the apostle, having mentioned the sins of his adversaries, ver. 12, 13, doth here hold forth his own practice, wherein, as in a glass, they and others might see their duty in opposition to those sins; "But God forbid," saith he, "that I should glory," &c.

2. Though the goodness or badness of men who maintain and labour to propagate opinions, are not sufficient arguments to prove either the truth or falsehood of what they maintain; seeing even the godly may err, and men, otherwise carnal, may discern what is truth or error, right or wrong, in some particulars better than they, 2 Sam. xxiv. 2, 3; yet, when truth is already demonstrated to be truth, and error to be error, by sound and solid arguments from Scripture and reason, then is it lawful and opportune to compare the pious conversation of those who are

for truth, with the impiety, pride, and vain glory of those who are for error, that hereby some taking weight may be added unto those former arguments, especially in the minds of those who are prejudged against the truth; for the apostle, in the body of the epistle having confirmed his own doctrine, and refuted the error of his adversaries by solid and nervous reasons, doth now in the conclusion compare his own life with theirs, and opposeth his Christian ingenuity and freedom from vain glory, to their hypocrisy, baseness and vanity: and this to make his former arguments weigh more with those prejudicate Galatians, as appeareth by comparing the two former verses with this and those which follow: "But God forbid that I should glory," &c.

3. Though it be lawful in some cases for men to glory in the good things of God bestowed upon them, (see ver. 4, Doct. 5,) yet it is altogether unlawful; yea, no less than abominable, to glory in any thing, so as that we place our confidence in it, for making us accepted to, and righteous before God, but only the merit and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the accomplishment whereof was upon the cross, John xix. 30; for in opposition to the false apostles their boasting in circumcision, as the meritorious cause of their salvation, (see chap. v. ver. 4, Doct. 1,) doth the apostle here say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. A holy heart, which hath experimentally tasted the worth that is in Christ, cannot easily think upon him, and especially upon his satisfaction and sufferings, but it must be enlarged towards him, and have high thoughts of that excellency and worth which is in him, joined with an earnest desire of a more near union with him, and with an acquiescence in him as its own, if so the heart be already persuaded of interest in him; yea, and will sometimes express those thoughts of him to the full, when occasion is offered to make any mention of him: for so Paul, having occasion to speak of Christ, designeth him so as he expresseth not only those high thoughts which he had of his excellency and worth, while he calleth him Lord, and Jesus, and Christ, but also the acquiescing of his heart in him as his own, while he saith, "Our Lord Jesus Christ."

5. The cross and sufferings of Christ effectually applied by faith, have that much power and virtue in them, as to make all things worldly, even the very applause and glory of the world, contemptible unto, and to be actually abhorred by a sincere believer, in so far as the power, terror, beauty, allurements, credit, pleasure, or profit of those things would interpose to mar that high esteem he ought to have of Christ's satisfaction and sufferings, or his right use-making of them, or his seeking after God's glory as the chief end of all his actions, and above all those things: for in those respects, the world was crucified, or as a dead carrion to Paul, wherein he could take no pleasure, and this by Christ, and the virtue of his sufferings, and nothing else; "By whom," or, "by which cross, the world is crucified unto me."

6. The more that high esteem of, and glory in Jesus Christ, doth grow in the heart of any,

the more will our account of all things worldly, being compared with him and opposed to him, decay : and where esteem of those things is upon the growing hand, that high account which ought to be had of Jesus Christ cannot but be decaying much ; for, with Paul, " I glory in the cross of Christ," and, " the world is crucified to me," did go together.

7. As a man truly godly, and renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and in so far as he is renewed, at least, cannot but be unsavoury unto, and vilipended by the world and wicked men in the world ; so this also doth come from the death and sufferings of Christ, not indeed, as from a working cause, (for Christ by his death doth work no such malicious disposition in wicked men towards his people,) but as from an occasion ; for from those gracious effects flowing from the Spirit of Christ, and wrought in those who are renewed, wicked men do take occasion to hate, abhor, and to take no pleasure in them, no more than they were the dead carriages of some notorious malefactors put to a shameful death by the hand of justice ; " By whom," saith he, " I am crucified unto the world."

VER. 15. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

He giveth a reason why he gloried only in the cross of Christ, and not in those fleshly privileges or ordinances, and why the world was crucified unto, and undervalued by him, to wit, because those things which were matter of gloriation to the false apostles, and by making an outward show whereof they gained the world's applause, (one instance whereof he giveth in circumcision, and illustrateth it by its contrary uncircumcision, under which may be comprehended the simple want of this ordinance, and all other things which the uncircumcised Gentiles boasted of, as wealth, wisdom, strength, policy, and whatsoever is glorious in the eyes of the world,) all which things he affirmeth to be of no account or worth in Christ Jesus, to wit, so as to make a man accepted of Christ, or to evidence his acceptance by him, or interest in him ; and withal sheweth that the new creature, or the renovation of the whole man by God's omnipotent creating power in knowledge, Col. iii. 10, righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24, is only that, in opposition to those external and worldly things, which maketh a man acceptable to God in Christ, and especially doth evidence his acceptance by, and interest in Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. As those things are most applauded unto by men of this world, which are most remote from, and have least relation unto Jesus Christ, and people's interest in him ; so for that reason, a godly heart will be more dead unto, and less taken up with applause from them, whether he have it or want it ; for Paul giveth this for a reason why the world was crucified unto him. Even that those things which had most of the world's applause, did no ways evidence a man's interest

in Christ, as the new creature did, as appeareth by the causal particle for ; " For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision."

2. Though other things besides the work of regeneration and saving grace, such as wealth, honour, wisdom, strength, are of good use for the affairs of this life, Eccles. ix. 15 ; yet none of these, nor any other thing else, if separated from the work of saving grace, are of any worth or account to commend us to God, or to evidence a saving interest in Jesus Christ and in those saving benefits which are purchased by him ; for in this respect, he saith, " In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision."

3. As we are so far dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, that no less than almighty creating power is requisite for working of a gracious change in us ; so this gracious change, thus wrought, doth reach the whole man ; his soul and all the faculties thereof, his body and all the members thereof, are renewed and changed, 1 Thess. v. 23 ; for this gracious change bath the name of a " new creature," importing it to flow from God's creating power, and that it is extended to the whole man.

4. This gracious change of the whole man is for singular use and advantage to the man who hath it, though not to give him a right to Christ, or to justify him, except in so far as the grace of faith is included in it ; for faith alone doth entitle a man to Christ, 1 John v. 12, 13, and justify him, Gal. ii. 16, yet to evidence unto his own conscience that he hath that right, and is a justified person, 1 John iii. 7, 14 ; for with respect to this, he saith, that " in Jesus Christ a new creature doth avail," with a little variation of the sense and meaning from that which we gave of almost the same words, chap. v. ver. 6, because his scope there is somewhat different from what it is here.

VER. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

He addeth a second reason, whereby he commendeth not only that glorying in the sufferings and satisfaction of Christ, as the only sure ground to build our faith for salvation upon (spoken of ver. 14,) but also the study of piety, and of becoming a new creature (whereof ver. 15,) as the only rule according to which all ought to walk in their several employments. And, secondly, doth excite all men to walk according to this rule, by a most sure prediction and promise of a double fruit to be reaped thereby, even peace, that is, peace with God, peace with their own conscience, and so much of peace one with another, and of sanctified prosperity, (which also goeth under the name of peace, Gen. xxviii. 21,) as God should see convenient for them, Psa. lxxxiv. 11 ; and mercy, that is, God's favour, the fountain of the former peace, which should furnish them with a timely remedy to all their evils and misery. And, thirdly, because the false apostles did glory much themselves, and bolstered up their followers

much with this, that they were the only true Israelites, as being joined to the people of God by circumcision, to whom those promises did belong; he sheweth that they who followed this rule, though they were not Israel according to the flesh, Rom. ii. 28, yet they were the Israel of God, the only true Israelites, John i. 47, as being the children of Abraham by faith, chap. iii. 7, for the particle "and," in this place, must be exegetic of one and the same thing, as Eph. i. 3, not copulative of diverse.

DOCTRINES.

1. The rule of a Christian man's walk, whether in relation to faith or manners, is not left indifferent for every man, so as he may choose what rule pleaseth him best; neither is it left arbitrary unto any man to impose a rule of walking upon others, but there is a fixed, determinate rule descended upon by God for all, which no man may either add to, or take from: for, saith he, "As many as walk according to this rule," meaning a determinate, fixed rule. The word in the original is borrowed from architects who try their work by rule and square: now, whatever is defective and requireth addition, or superfluous and requireth diminution, is not a perfect and just measure or rule.

2. Though this rule and canon of faith and manners be the whole word of God contained in Scripture, 2 Pet. i. 19—21, yet the grace of faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life, are a doctrinal sum of this rule, if we mean the doctrine of faith and repentance; or a practical sum, if we mean the graces themselves; there being no point of truth taught, and no duty pressed in the whole Scripture, which one way or other relateth not to one of these two; for, while he saith, "As many as walk according to this rule," it is all one upon the matter, whether by the rule he mean the doctrine contained in the whole epistle, which is one and the same in substance with the rest of Scripture, or the graces of faith in Christ, called, ver. 14, "glorying in the cross of Christ," and of repentance unto life, called, ver. 15, "the new creature," although it be more probable he mean the latter.

3. This rule of faith and manners, contained in the Scripture, is unchangeable, and ever to remain as that to which all men in all ages, to the end of the world, ought to make themselves conform: for the word rendered walk in the original, is in the future tense, as relating to all time: "As many as shall walk according to this rule."

4. So accurate and orderly is this rule in itself, Psa. cxix. 96, so ignorant are we of it in many particulars relating both to faith and manners, Psa. cxix. 18, and so many and subtle are those temptations which Satan setteth on foot to make us transgress and slight this rule, Eph. vi. 11, that there is great necessity of circumspection, accuracy, and attention unto those who would rightly walk according to this rule: for the word rendered "walk," signifieth to walk orderly, attentively, as soldiers when they keep rank: "As many as walk according to this rule."

5. Even those who walk according to this rule, are not so much freed from sin and misery, but

they stand in need of mercy; yea, all their receipts do come in the way, not of merit, but of undeserved mercy; for mercy relateth to sin and misery; and to them that "walk according to this rule," there is a promise not only of peace, but also of mercy, and of peace flowing from mercy: "Peace shall be upon them, and mercy," saith he.

6. As tender walkers according to this rule may expect sufficient encouragement and reward, even in this life, and such as may counterbalance all contrary discouragements and hardships which usually occur in that way; so their encouragements are not from the world, but from above, descending from heaven, and therefore such as cannot be hindered by the malice of men: for "peace shall be upon them, and mercy," saith he; the word rendered "upon them," is emphatic, and importeth that those blessings fall down upon them from above.

7. It is not sufficient for a minister of Christ who would comfort and encourage weak Christians (who are otherwise apt to be discouraged through multitude of temptations in their Christian course, Heb. xii. 12,) that he find out and apply such precious promises as are pertinent to their case, but he must also endeavour their satisfaction in this, that they are in the number of those to whom such promises do belong, and who with God's allowance may lay hold upon them, and draw out that comfort which is contained in them, otherwise the discouraged person will look upon it as presumption to apply any of those precious promises, Psa. lxxvii. 2, though otherwise he most gladly would: for the apostle sheweth, that those who walk according to this rule, and to whom he promiseth peace and mercy, are the Israel of God, to whom such promises were made and do appertain: "And upon the Israel of God," saith he.

VER. 17. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

The apostle (having now sufficiently vindicated his doctrine, and justified his practice, especially from those calumnies which were spread of him, as if he had preached circumcision, chap. v. 11,) doth here by his apostolical authority discharge any whomsoever to occasion further trouble to him, or unnecessary diversions from the great work of the gospel, whether by speaking against his doctrine, or by speaking or entertaining calumnies and slanders of him, especially that formerly spoken of; and this because the manifold sufferings which he had endured from the Jews his countrymen and others, for his sincere preaching of the gospel, without any mixture of Jewish ceremonies, 2 Cor. xi. 24, the marks, scars, or prints whereof, which were yet visible, and to be seen in his body, did sufficiently witness and seal the truth of his doctrine, and especially did abundantly refute that former calumny: for, if he had preached circumcision, he should not have been so persecuted, chap. v. 11, and hereby also he opposeth his own practice and courage to the pusillanimity of his adversaries, and their base desire of eschewing a cross for the speaking of truth, ver. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though it be the duty of ministers to contend for truth against error, Jude 3, and to wipe off that disgrace which adversaries intend by unjust imputations and calumnies to fasten on their persons, Rom. iii. 8, yet the spending of much time in those eristic debates, may create no small trouble and heart-breaking vexation to their spirits, as diverting them exceedingly from that far sweeter, and in some respects far more profitable work both to themselves and others, even of preaching the positive and practical truths of the gospel unto their hearers, and of feeding by meditation upon those truths themselves: for Paul, speaking of their contradiction to truth, and calumnies against his person, saith, "From henceforth let no man trouble me;" importing his wrestling with those who did by way of unpleasant diversion trouble him, and so as they consumed his strength; for so much doth the word rendered "trouble" signify.

2. When the mouths of heretics and slanderers cannot be stopped with reason and fair persuasions, but rather they prove more insolent, it is the duty of those who have authority, wisely to make use of it, for putting them to silence; for so doth Paul, having used abundance of reasons and persuasions already, by his apostolic authority command, "From henceforth let no man trouble me."

3. As it is the lot of Christ's most eminent servants to meet with base and disgraceful usage from raging persecutors, as if they were the basest of slaves, malefactors, and the very off-scourings of men; so whatever hard measure his servants do receive from such, the Lord Christ will look on it as done to himself: he will own their sufferings, wounds, and scars of those wounds, as his own, and alloweth his suffering martyrs to look so upon them also, and that because they are inflicted for the profession of his name, 1 Pet. iv. 14, and because of that strict union which is betwixt Christ and believers, whereby he and they are only one mystical Christ, Eph. i. 23; for Paul had received stripes and wounds, the marks whereof did afterwards remain in his flesh; the word signifieth the prints and marks of such stripes as slaves and malefactors used to be beaten with, and those he calleth the marks of Christ; "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

4. Though men of this world do but judge basely of those who suffer for Christ, and of their sufferings, together with the prints and memorials of their sufferings, as they do judge of the stripes and scars of those who are justly beaten for their faults, Acts xxiv. 5; yet the person who hath suffered will not be ashamed of, but rather in a holy manner will glory in, the very prints and marks of those stripes and wounds which he hath received for the name of Christ: yea, it is the duty of all to think the more honourably of that person, seeing those are the marks of Christ: for Paul doth in a manner boast of those his marks which were imprinted by his persecutors of purpose to disgrace him; "I do bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

5. Though wicked heretics may suffer much

before they renounce their erroneous opinions, so that a man's suffering for his opinion will not presently prove his opinion to be truth; yet when other strong arguments from Scripture and reason are already made use of by a preacher to confirm the truth of his doctrine, this may add weight to all his other arguments, and argue his sincerity and uprightness in the defence of his doctrine, even that with courage and constancy, and that frequently, he hath sealed the truth of it by his sufferings: for the apostle, having already spoken sufficiently in reason for the defence of his doctrine against his adversaries, doth now make mention of his sufferings for the truth as an additional argument to stop the mouths of those who did oppose his doctrine, and question his sincerity in the defence of it; "From henceforth let no man trouble me," saith he; "For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

VER. 18. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Fourthly, the apostle concludeth the epistle with his ordinary farewell wish; wherein, having designated them by the name of "brethren," he wisheth that God's grace and favour, with all spiritual benefits flowing from it, and purchased and conveyed to them through Jesus Christ, (therefore called "the grace of Jesus Christ") might reside, both in the effects and sense of it, in their spirits and whole soul, and affixeth his "Amen," as an evidence of fervency and confidence in his wish, and as a confirmation of the whole doctrine delivered by him in this epistle. Besides what is already observed upon the like farewell wish in the close of the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, hence learn, 1. The more of prejudice a minister doth apprehend to be in a people or person against himself and his doctrine, he ought to endeavour the more, by affectionate insinuations, and by frequent and seasonable reiterating of loving compellations, the rooting out of those prejudices: for, besides all the insinuations which he hath used towards, and lovely compellations which he hath given to, those Galatians, so much possessed with prejudice against him, chap. iv. 16, he designateth them by the name of "brethren" in his farewell wish, which he doth to no other church, except to that of Corinth, 2 Cor. xiii. 11, who at that time had deep prejudice against him also; "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The main thing in people for which ministers ought to care, and which should be most adverted unto by people themselves, is the spirit and inward man, as that for which God doth mainly call, Prov. xxiii. 26, and being kept right, will command the outward man, and keep it right also, Prov. iv. 23, and without the concurrence whereof, all that is done in the service of God is nothing but detestable hypocrisy, Matt. xv. 8; for the apostle wisheth the grace of God to be with their spirits, by seating itself there, that it may command the body and all the members thereof from thence, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit," saith he.

THE
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.



AUL, having planted a famous church at Ephesus, Acts xix. 1, 10, &c., a prime city in the lesser Asia, Rev. i. 11, and having foreseen by the spirit of prophecy, that though this church (as appeareth from the strain of the whole Epistle) was for the time free from schism, and constant in the doctrine of the gospel, yet false teachers, in progress of time, would arise among them to pervert them, Acts xx. 29, 30. And fearing also, lest his own present sufferings (he being now a prisoner at Rome, chap. iii. 1.) should make them faint and sit up in their Christian course, chap. iii. 13, therefore, and upon these occasions, he writeth this Epistle unto them; his scope wherein, is to excite them unto constancy and further progress in faith and piety, as appeareth from the subject matter of the whole Epistle, and more especially from chap. iii. 13, &c., and chap. iv. 1. In order to which scope, (after the inscription, ver. 1, 2, chap. i.) he propoundeth to their view a short sum of the doctrine of faith and salvation by Christ, which he doth several ways illustrate, commend, extend both to Jew and Gentile, and guard from contempt occasioned by the cross, exhorting them oft-times indirectly to cleave unto it, and make progress in the knowledge of it, to the end of chap. iii. After which he inciteth them to the study and practice of holiness, both in the general and special duties of a Christian life, chap. iv. v. and to ver. 21 of chap. vi. And so (having recommended some private affairs of his own to the care of Tychicus, ver. 21, 22,) he concludeth the Epistle with almost the same salutation by which he made his entry to it, ver. 23, 24.

CHAPTER I.

IN the first part of this chapter (after the inscription, ver. 1, 2,) the apostle unfoldeth the grounds

and causes of the salvation of sinners, ascribing all unto God's free grace in Christ; which he doth, first, generally, by way of thanksgiving unto God, ver. 3. Secondly, more particularly: and first, he treateth of the grounds, causes, and means of salvation, as they were prepared in the eternal decree of election, which he describeth from those ends which God intended in that decree, as our sanctification, ver. 4, our adoption or glorification, ver. 5, and the glory of his grace, ver. 6. Next, as they were purchased by Christ in the work of redemption, ver. 7. And lastly, as they are applied unto the elect in their effectual calling, ver. 8, which is illustrated from the mean made use of for bringing it about, to wit, the revealing and publishing of the gospel, ver. 9, and from the end intended by God in the use of this mean, even the gathering together in one of all the scattered elect, ver. 10. And thirdly, he clearth yet further the former doctrine concerning the freedom of God's grace through Christ in our salvation, by giving some instances of it, 1. In the believing Jews, ver. 11, 12. Next, in the believing Gentiles, ver. 13, 14.

In the second part of the chapter, he doth indirectly incite them to constancy and progress in the knowledge of this doctrine; first, by showing how he blessed God, and prayed unto him for them, ver. 15, 16. Secondly, by holding forth a short sum of his prayer unto God on their behalf, even that God would bestow a greater measure of wisdom and saving knowledge upon them, ver. 17, 18, whereby they might know those good things, which they were to partake of in heaven, ver. 18, together with the working of God's mighty power in and towards believers, ver. 19. Thirdly, by commending this power of God unto them, from its mighty working in order to Christ's exaltation, ver. 20, which exalted state of Christ, he sheweth, doth include power and superiority over all creatures in general, ver. 21, 22, and over his church in particular, ver. 22, 23.

VER. 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

2. Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

In these two verses is the inscription of the Epistle, containing, first, a description of the penman; from his name Paul, from his office "an apostle," and call to his office, "by the will of God." Secondly, a description of those to whom the Epistle was directed, from the place of their habitation "at Ephesus," and their spiritual state, they were saints and faithful, ver. 1. Thirdly, the apostle's usual salutation or commendation, whereby he prayeth for grace and peace unto them, ver. 2.

Besides what hath been already observed upon the inscriptions of the Epistles to the Galatians, Philippians, and Colossians, learn, 1. The wisdom of God hath judged it most convenient to teach his people, not immediately by himself or by the ministry of angels, but of men like unto ourselves; hereby to try his people's obedience, Matt. x. 40, and because their infirmity could not well endure the ministry of others, Exod. xx. 19, for Paul is employed by God to instruct those Ephesians by writing this Epistle; "Paul, an apostle by the will of God, to the saints."

2. It doth not follow hence, that every man who thinketh himself sufficiently gifted, may take upon him the office of the ministry, except he be called unto it of God; for Paul sheweth he was called to the office of an apostle before he did meddle with it; "An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God."

3. The power of God not only can, but also frequently doth gather and preserve a church to himself, even where Satan's seat is, and wickedness of all sorts doth most abound, hereby fulfilling what was long since foretold, Psa. cx. 2, that Christ should rule in the midst of his enemies; for there was a church of saints even at Ephesus, a city famous for idolatry and witchcraft, Acts xix. 19, 24, 34, 35; "To the saints which are at Ephesus."

4. Even those who are saints and believers, do stand in need of God's grace and favour both to pardon and subdue sin, seeing the best of them are but sanctified in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, having the dregs of corruption always remaining, and frequently stirring in them, Rom. vii. 23; for the apostle's wish in behalf of the saints at Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus is, "Grace be to you."

VER. 3. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

The apostle's scope being to establish those Ephesians in the sincere doctrine of the gospel already received by them, and for this end to unfold the grounds and causes of their salvation, together with the freedom of God's grace in Christ, upon which salvation (with all its causes, and every step tending towards it) is founded, he doth first propound the grounds and causes in general, and this not warshly [uncandidly], and in a coldfire [indifferent] manner, but with an open mouth, and a more

enlarged heart, by way of thanksgiving to God, whom he describeth from his twofold relation to Christ, as being "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" for the particle "and," in this place, is not copulative of things different, but exegetic of one and the same thing, as Psa. xviii. 46. And first, he is a God to Christ, chiefly because of the covenant of redemption betwixt God and Christ as Mediator, the mutual conditions of which covenant are, Isa. liii. 10, 11. John vi. 39, 40. And secondly, he is the Father of Christ, to wit, not only as Christ is God, by an eternal and unspeakable generation, Psa. ii. 7, but also, as Christ is man, God is his Father by virtue of the personal union of the two natures in Christ, Luke i. 32. The reason of which, his thanksgiving to God, he sheweth to be God's bestowing of real blessings upon believers, and those not common or temporal only, but special and "spiritual blessings," which tend to a spiritual and supernatural end; and those not sparingly, but fully, and with an open hand, even "all blessings," and this "in heavenly places," that is, from heaven, his glorious throne; or because those spiritual blessings shall not be consummated and fully perfected, until believers be in heaven: all which blessings, he sheweth, are bestowed upon believers in Christ, he, as our head, attorney, and advocate, 1 John ii. 1, having received those blessings in our name, and for our behoof, Eph. ii. 6, by whose merit also they are purchased, Isa. liii. 5, in whom, and by virtue of our union with him and right to him, we have a right to such of those blessings as we have not yet actually received, 1 John v. 12, and do come to the possession of these which we already enjoy, John i. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though we cannot bless the Lord, as he blesteth us by bestowing real blessings and favours upon us, which before we wanted, Gen. xxiv. 35, there being such a fulness of blessedness in God, as nothing can be superadded, Job xxii. 2; yet it is our duty to bless him so, as that being convinced of that blessedness, of those excellences which are in him, and favours which are bestowed upon us by him, we do not only esteem highly of him because of those, Luke i. 46, but also express this our high esteem, and that not only in words, whether by speaking to God himself in the duty of prayer and praise, Psa. civ. 1, or by speaking of him, and to his commendation unto others, Psa. xxxiv. 3, 4, &c., but also and mainly in our life and actions, 1 Cor. x. 31; for Paul doth here bless the Lord; "Blessed be God," saith he.

2. It is a looking to God with respect had to Jesus Christ, which inflameth the heart with such a mixture of love and admiration at his excellences and worth, that it must of necessity break forth in blessing of him: God considered without Christ being a consuming fire, to whom there can be no confident approaching by sinful creatures, neither in the duties of prayer, nor of praise; but the veil of Christ's flesh doth break the beams of his terror, so that we may stedfastly behold his attributes and excellences, rejoicing in them, and blessing him for them: for Paul,

while he blesseth God, doth look upon him through this veil; "Blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. A holy soul, truly sensible of his lost condition by nature, and of God's mercy in his delivery from that woeful state, cannot seriously think, or speak of that subject, but his heart must be inflamed with love to God; yea, and break forth in praises and thanksgiving to him, when occasion offereth: for so doth Paul, "Blessed be God, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings."

4. Though we are bound to bless the Lord even for temporal favours, and things necessary for the life which now is, *Psa. cvii. 8*; yet a renewed heart is most taken up with, and blesseth God most for spiritual blessings, and such as concern our eternal well-being, those being not only most durable, *John vi. 27*, but also most discriminating betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate, *Eccles. ix. 1*; *1 John iii. 14*; for Paul blesseth God for these blessings; "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings."

5. God is the author and worker of all spiritual blessings in a special manner, in so far as he produceth them not by a general providence actuating and concurring with natural principles and powers for producing of such and such effects, (as he is the author even of common blessings, health, riches, honour, and such like, *Psa. lxxv. 6, 7*;) but by his special grace, whereby he createth in the heart (by nature, dead in sins and trespasses, *Eph. ii. 1*), a power to do good, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26*, and actuateth that power, making it to work, *Phil. ii. 13*; for the apostle ascribeth the production of all spiritual blessings to God, while speaking of God he saith, "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings."

6. Though God, considered as Creator and merciful upholder of his own creatures, doth bestow temporal blessings upon the world, even upon those who never heard of Christ, *Psa. xvii. 14*; yet, spiritual blessings, such as the saving graces of faith, hope and love, come from God, being considered not as Creator, but in, and with relation to Jesus Christ, who behaved to purchase those blessings of new, before fallen man could acquire either a right unto them, or possession of them: for, saith Paul, it is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings;" and again, "He hath blessed us in Christ."

7. Spiritual blessings, to wit, those of them which are absolutely necessary to salvation and eternal blessedness, are linked together, and cannot be separated: where God bestoweth one of those, he bestoweth all, there being a necessary concatenation among them all, *Rom. viii. 29, 30*, so that they either co-exist, or at least in God's due time do follow one upon another, *Phil. i. 6*; for, saith Paul, "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings."

8. Though there be some spiritual blessings, such as perfection in holiness, and the full enjoying of God in glory, the possession whereof is not attained unto by believers so long as they are here on earth, *1 Cor. xiii. 12*; yet, because of the believer's undoubted right unto those blessings, *1 Cor. iii. 21, 22*, and God's unchangeable pur-

pose to bestow them, *Psa. lxxxiv. 11*, and because of the first fruits and earnest of those blessings already bestowed upon the believer, see *ver. 14*, and of Christ's having taken possession of those in the believer's name, *chap. ii. 6*, he may be as much assured of his full enjoying of them, as if he had them already in hand: for, saith Paul, "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings," as if all, none being excepted, were already enjoyed.

9. Spiritual blessings are of an heavenly rise and nature, there being no second cause upon earth, or among things created, which doth concur with God in bringing them to pass, as in the production of other natural effects: for as the word is well rendered, "in heavenly places," and better than "in heavenly things," so it seemeth the bestowing of those spiritual blessings, is ascribed to God in heavenly places, mainly because their original is only from heaven, and not from earth; "With all spiritual blessings in heavenly places."

VER. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

The apostle, in the second place, treateth of those spiritual blessings more particularly, and so doth branch forth at large that reason of his thanksgiving to God presently mentioned, and this in pursuance of the former scope, which is to show, that salvation with all its causes flows only from God's free grace in Christ: that so the Ephesians might be firmly rooted and confirmed in the faith of this truth. And, first, he speaketh of those blessings as they were prepared and appointed for believers in God's eternal decree of election and predestination, to *ver. 7*. In this verse he sheweth, first, that these spiritual blessings are bestowed upon believers in time, not by chance, or rashly, not from any worth in the receiver, but according as God had foreordained in his decree of election, whereby, "before the foundation of the world," that is, from all eternity, (see *John xvii. 24*;) he did choose some of mankind to eternal life, *Matt. xxv. 34*, passing by others, and did choose them in Christ, not, as if Christ's death had moved God to love and elect; for his electing love did move him to give Christ for sinners, *John iii. 16*; neither did he choose them in Christ, as if they had been considered by God as already in Christ by faith, and that because of their faith thus foreseen, they had been elected by him; for so faith should not be a fruit flowing from election, but a condition pre-required in the person to be elected, which doth contradict this same very scripture, affirming that all spiritual blessings (whereof faith is one) do flow from, and are bestowed according to the decree of election: he did therefore choose them in Christ, as in him, whom he did in one and the self-same decree choose to be the head of the elect, and chief foundation stone of all that precious building, his own house and church, *1 Pet. ii. 6*, and by whom that glory, and all things tending to that glory unto which he did choose

them, were to be purchased; that so (without doing injury to provoked justice) they might be applied unto, and actually bestowed upon the elect; for so is this purpose more clearly expressed, 1 Thess. v. 9. Secondly, he illustrateth this decree of election from the nearest end which God did design to be brought about by it, even the sanctification of the persons elected, whereby they should be rendered blameless before men, and sincere and upright before God, and that "in love," to wit, in the duties of love to their neighbour, flowing from love to God, Matt. xxii. 37—39, by which love, as a touchstone, the soundness of their sanctification should be tried.

DOCTRINES.

1. As God from all eternity hath chosen some of mankind, and firmly decreed to bestow upon them eternal life, Luke xii. 32, so there are others whom he decreed not to save, but to condemn; in which latter decree, and much more in the former, God hath done nothing unjustly; seeing as sovereign Lord over all the creatures he hath absolute dominion to dispose of them as he pleaseth, Rom. ix. 19—21; and though sin in the reprobate was not the cause of God's decree of reprobation, Rom. ix. 11—13, yet it is the cause of the reprobate's condemnation, so that his condemnation is just: for, saith he, "He hath chosen us:" which implieth, some were not chosen, seeing where all is taken there is no choice.

2. Though no man (except he who hath sinned that unpardonable sin, Matt. xii. 32) can certainly know he is a reprobate; there being no marks, except that alone, set down in Scripture, by which reprobation can be certainly known; yet, the elect may attain to the assured knowledge of their own election, seeing God hath set down in Scripture the marks and evidences of election, John vi. 37, and hath promised to give his Spirit unto his own, whereby they may infallibly discern these marks, at least, at sometimes in themselves, 1 Cor. ii. 12; for although the apostle doth pronounce those Ephesians to be elected according to the judgment of charity only, which believeth the best of others, where nothing appears to the contrary, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, yet, he behaved to have some undoubted persuasion of his own election, before he could warrantably conclude himself to be elected, seeing not charity, but certain knowledge is the principle from which a man ought to judge of himself, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "As he hath chosen us in him," saith he.

3. Though the doctrine of election and reprobation be such, as the unlearned and unstable are apt to wrest and stumble at to their own destruction, 2 Pet. iii. 16, yet, it is not wholly to be suppressed and locked up in silence from the Lord's people, but would be soberly, and prudently sometimes propounded unto them; and that because of the many and great advantages which may be reaped, not only by the doctrine of election, such as the assurance of salvation, Rom. viii. 29, 30, strong incitements unto holiness, 2 Pet. i. 10, and courage under crosses of all sorts, Rom. viii. 38, 39, but also by the doctrine

of reprobation, as contributing much to promote the salvation of the elect, by making them hate sin more, Psa. cxix. 119, 120, and prize the kindness and good-will of God more, which made choice of them, passing by others as good as they, Rom. ix. 22, 23; for the apostle propoundeth this doctrine to the whole church, and insisteth upon it, "According as he hath chosen us in him," &c.

4. As electing love in God is of an old standing, even from all eternity, and therefore most free; there being nothing in the elect, before they had a being, which might draw his love towards them; so the Lord can, and usually doth keep his purposes and thoughts for good to a people or person for a long time hid, before he do discover them, and make them known: for he had set his love upon these believing Ephesians from all eternity, which yet lay hid from the beginning of the world, and did not kyth [discover] until their effectual calling; "He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world."

5. The Lord bestoweth spiritual blessings in time, according to what he hath enacted in that his eternal decree of election before time; so that every elect soul shall most undoubtedly enjoy those blessings: and all of them (even faith itself not being excepted) do flow from election, and are bestowed upon the elect, because they are elected unto them: for, saith he, "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, according as he hath chosen us in him."

6. God did not choose or elect us, because we were holy, or because he did foresee we would be holy, but that we might be holy; so that neither foreseen holiness, good works, nor foreseen faith, were the causes of election, but effects and fruits flowing from it: for, saith he, "God hath chosen us that we should be holy."

7. God hath elected none to enjoy everlasting glory after this, but such as he hath chosen to be holy here: and therefore a man may safely and certainly conclude he hath been elected from all eternity, if he be sanctified and renewed by the Spirit of holiness in time: and whatever assurance of election is pretended unto by any who lead an unholy life, it is but a strong delusion, a vain presumption, and no well-grounded persuasion; for "He hath chosen us," as to heaven and glory, so also that "we should be holy."

8. This real and saving holiness, from which a man may conclude his own election, is joined with an honest endeavour after such a conversation as is blameless and obnoxious unto no just reproof from men: it is not only inward and in the heart, but outward also, and in the hand and tongue: for, saith he, "He hath chosen us, that we should be holy and without blame," to wit, from men, as the word is taken, Luke i. 6, 1 Tim. iii. 2.

9. Where this real and saving holiness, the fruit of electing love, is, there will not only be a blameless conversation before men, but also sincerity of heart before God, which doth not imply perfection in holiness, (for none should then be holy before him in this life, 1 Kings viii. 46,) but ingenuity and singleness of spirit, opposite to a double heart and hypocrisy, even such ingenuity, as a man dare appeal to God to judge of his honest endeavour after that in reality and in deed,

which he pretendeth unto in the ways of God; for those words "before him," express such sincerity of heart, (see 2 Kings xx. 3, Psa. xviii. 23,) "we should be holy before him."

10. Sound holiness and sincerity of heart, are most manifested in the duties of love to our neighbour, flowing from our love to God; for external duties of religion may be diligently followed, even by hypocrites, Isa. i. 11, and the inward substantial duties thereof are not so easily discerned, neither by others nor yet by ourselves, as when they are accompanied with the painful and conscientious practice of those duties, which love to our neighbour doth enjoin: for therefore doth the apostle give an instance of this holiness in love, rather than in any other duty; "And without blame before him in love."

VER. 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

In this verse, the apostle doth first express God's eternal decree of election, formerly mentioned by another word, to wit, "predestination," which setteth forth the same decree and purpose together with its eternity and extent, not only to the end proposed by God, but to the whole progress of convenient means, by which the end intended was infallibly to be brought about; secondly, he further describeth this decree of election and predestination from another end, which God designed to be brought about by it, even the "adoption of children by Jesus Christ," to be bestowed upon the elect: whereby is meant not only that begun adoption which believers possess here, John i. 12, and whereby they have a right to the heavenly inheritance, Rom. viii. 17, but also and mainly that complete and perfect adoption, whereof the elect shall partake hereafter, even the actual possession of their glorious inheritance: see the word so taken, Rom. viii. 23; he describeth it also from the causes moving God to elect any, or one more than another, which are set down, first, more briefly, "to himself," it is better rendered "in himself:" whereby are excluded all causes moving God to this act, without himself; secondly, more largely and expressly, to wit, God's absolute and sovereign will, swayed with favour and good-will towards those whom he did choose.

DOCTRINES.

1. God hath not only decreed to set forth the glory of his mercy, by bestowing heaven and glory upon some of mankind, Luke xii. 32, but, in that same wise and eternal counsel of his, he hath foreseen and accordingly decreed by what means and helps the person so elected may come to heaven, and shall undoubtedly obtain it. And therefore none can warrantably expect that this decree of predestination will bring them to salvation, if they live in the profane neglect and contempt of those means which do lead unto it: for the force and usual acception of the word "predestinated," is extended to the means as well as to the end; "Having predestinated us."

2. No, not the elect themselves are children to

God by nature, they are not born sons, but made to be sons by grace and adoption, who before were heirs of hell and children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, for a child by adoption is opposed to a child by nature; men are not said to adopt their own children, but strangers, Exod. ii. 10, now God hath "predestinated the elect unto the adoption of children."

3. God is graciously pleased in time, not only to call and justify those whom he did choose for himself before all time, Rom. viii. 30, but also to make them partakers of the grace of adoption, whereby a further dignity is put upon them than formerly was, even that being already drawn out of nature to grace in their effectual calling, and reconciled to God in their justification, they are now advanced to the dignity of sons and children to the Most High, and have a right to all the privileges of sons, as the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15, fatherly pity from God under their infirmities, Psa. ciii. 13, protection from the rage of enemies, Prov. xiv. 26, provision and furniture for their straits and necessities, Matt. vi. 30—32, necessary chastisement from God as their Father, Heb. xii. 6, and a right to the inheritance of life eternal, Heb. i. 14, not only as they are friends with God, and clothed with a perfect righteousness, which they have by justification, but as God's own sons and heirs; which inheritance, being once possessed, their adoption, which is now but begun, shall be full and complete, Rom. viii. 23, for, saith the apostle, "He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children."

4. Besides those other differences which are betwixt God's adopting of the elect to be his own children, and one man's adopting of another to be his son and heir, this is one; men do adopt children, because they have none of their own, but God doth not adopt the elect from any such indigence or want, as having a natural Son of his own, even Jesus Christ the only begotten of the Father: for the apostle, having spoken of the adoption of the elect, doth presently make mention of Jesus Christ the Son of God by nature; "Unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ."

5. That any of those who are children of wrath by nature, are advanced to that excellent dignity of being children by adoption to the Most High, and of enjoying all the fore-mentioned privileges of children, it is through Jesus Christ the Mediator, in so far as he having purchased heaven the inheritance of children by his own merit, he hath absolute right and title unto it to bestow it upon whom he pleaseth, Matt. xxviii. 18; and having united the elect by faith unto himself, and thereby given them a right and interest in himself, they not only become the sons of God, John i. 12, but are made heirs and co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17, and so do enjoy a right to the heavenly inheritance through him: for, saith he, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ."

6. As God hath in his eternal decree of election firmly resolved and determined to bestow this high privilege of adoption upon the elect, both begun adoption here, and complete adoption, or the actual installing of them in glory hereafter, and by consequence did decree to give

them saving faith also, seeing adoption floweth from it, and dependeth upon it, John i. 12, so, whomsoever he hath decreed to lift up to this high dignity of sons, he hath decreed also to renew their nature, and to make them holy; that so their carriage may be suitable to their state and privileges: for, saith Paul, ver. 4, "He hath chosen us, that we should be holy;" and here, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children."

7. All was in God himself, and nothing without himself which moved him to elect and choose those whom he did set his love upon; so that neither foreseen works, or the right use of natural parts, Eph. ii. 10, nor foreseen faith, Acts xiii. 48, nor yet the merit of Christ, 1 John iv. 9, nor outward respects, such as nobility, wisdom, riches, 1 Cor. i. 26, yea, nothing present or to come in heaven or earth did move him to choose any, or one more than another: for, saith he, "God predestinated us in himself;" whereby are excluded all causes moving God to this act without himself.

8. God hath absolute power and sovereign right to dispose as he will of all his creatures, even of reasonable creatures; and this not only in their temporary, but also in their eternal concerns: which sovereign will of his, is the supreme sinless cause why God did elect some to glory; yea, and why he did pass by others, Rom. ix. 18; for the apostle, condescending upon the reason why God did design some for grace here and glory hereafter, doth pitch upon this sovereign will of his; "According to the good pleasure of his will."

9. The Lord God hath sweetly tempered his absolute dominion and sovereign will, with rich favour and condescendency towards those whom he did elect: his will to them was good-pleasure and good-will, in so far as when he might have fitted them for destruction as he did the reprobate, Rom. ix. 22, or never have given them a being, or but the being of beasts, to be annihilated after death, or have drawn out their life to all eternity upon earth, allowing them some tolerable contentment there, every one whereof would have been a favour, being compared with the state of damned reprobates; yet, his good-will hath been a better will to them, whereby he hath decreed to give unto them a rational being with a short lease of a miserable life here, and endless joys and pleasures at his right hand for evermore, 1 Thess. iv. 17, for, saith the apostle, "He hath predestinated us," not simply according to his will, but "according to the good pleasure of his will."

VER. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

The apostle having already described the decree of election from two of those ends which God proposed unto himself to be brought about by it, to wit, the sanctification (ver. 4.) and glorification of the elect, (ver. 5.) doth here, in further pursuance of the former scope, mentioned upon ver. 3, first, further describe this decree

from a third and supreme end which God therein designed most, which is, that as his grace, or freedom of his love toward the elect, is glorious and praiseworthy in itself, and therefore called "the glory of his grace," or his glorious grace, according to the custom of the Hebrew language; so it might be acknowledged to be such, and set forth as such, especially by the elect themselves: and, secondly, that he may clear how deservedly this grace ought to be praised, having already shown that it was the fountain cause of our election before time, ver. 5, he doth now declare that this same grace and good-will in God, is the only cause why God doth in time manifest that his eternal love in the effects thereof, by making the elect lovely, and fit to be accepted of by God as friends through Jesus Christ the beloved, and by accepting them both in their persons and actions, and being reconciled to them accordingly; for the word signifieth both "to make accepted," and "to accept."

DOCTRINES.

1. That grace, free favour, and good-will, which God doth manifest in saving of lost sinners, is altogether glorious, as having many and singular excellences in it. It is an ancient grace, ver. 4, most free, Hos. xiv. 4, omnipotent, John xii. 32, and a most liberal grace, Psa. lxxxiv. 11, and therefore a grace so glorious, that no created understanding can conceive, much less tongue can express those marvellous, ravishing, and transcendent excellences which are in it, Eph. iii. 19, for he calleth it "the glory of his grace," or his glorious grace.

2. It is the duty of all the elect to praise, admire, and highly to esteem of this glorious grace, and to testify this their high esteem of it both by word and work, in the whole strain of their life and conversation; this grace being so glorious and praiseworthy in itself, so rich and beneficial towards us, and this duty of praise being all which we can bestow, Psa. cxvi. 12, 13, and God doth call for from us in way of thankfulness for this his glorious grace, Psa. l. 15; for seeing God in election did propound to himself the up-stirring of the elect to "praise the glory of his grace," it must needs be their duty to praise it.

3. This eternal decree of election and predestination is so contrived, that when it is made known, matter of praise to God's glorious grace is abundantly manifested in it: for its rise is of grace, preventing all actual or foreseen worth in those who are elected, (see ver. 4, Doct. 6.) and all the mides [means], whereby the execution of this decree is carried on to its utmost period, are also of grace, (see ver. 5, Doct. 1.) so that all along it breatheth grace: for, "He did choose us to the praise of the glory of his grace;" and therefore matter of praise, for grace behoved to be manifested in his choosing of us, when it is revealed, otherwise he should not have taken a convenient mean for bringing about the intended end.

4. That great and supreme end, which God intended most to be brought about by this eternal decree of election, (and to which the other two ends formerly mentioned, to wit, the sanctification and glorification of the elect, are but subordinate means for bringing of it about)

was, that hereby men and angels might see matter of praise and thanksgiving unto his rich mercy and free grace, and be excited to set forth the praises thereof accordingly; not, as if he stood in need to have his glory acknowledged, or praised by creatures, nor as if their praising of him could add any perfection to him, who was completely glorified in himself from all eternity, John xvii. 5, but he holdeth forth matter of his own praise, that the elect may be perfected in praising of him: for, saith the apostle, "God hath predestinated us to the praise of the glory of his grace."

5. There ought to be a sweet concord and harmony betwixt a minister's doctrine and practice, his hand and tongue would jointly preach and press the same truth; for so his doctrine shall have greater weight with hearers, when he doth commend and seal the truth of it by his own example and practice; thus Paul, while he is pointing out the duty of the elect to be the praising of God's glorious grace, he himself is practising this duty; for as is clear from ver. 3, he is speaking all along of this purpose by way of praise and thanksgiving to God.

6. Though the elect from all eternity are loved by God with his love of benevolence, whereby he willed good unto them, and decreed to bestow good upon them, ver. 4, yet there is a love of complacency, or delight in God, whereby he not only willeth good unto the persons so beloved, but accepteth of them, acquiesceth in them, as in his own children and friends reconciled to him, and delighteth himself in his own graces bestowed upon them, in which respect the elect, as being children of wrath by nature, are not from eternity beloved of God, nor accepted of by him; yea, not before they be effectually called and reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ, Heb. xi. 6, for Paul speaketh of God's making us accepted and lovely, or of his accepting us, as of an action done in time, "Wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

7. Whomsoever God hath elected before time, those he accepteth of, and is well pleased with, in time, both in their persons and actions, if they be good; having first made them lovely and fit to be accepted of by him: which he doth by working in them a conformity (both as to their state and actions) with the rule, according to which he doth accept; not the rule prescribed by the law, which requireth no less than a perfect and personal righteousness in order to our acceptance by God, Gal. iii. 10; but the rule prescribed by the gospel, which admitteth the imputed righteousness of a cautioner in place of a perfect personal righteousness, whereby our persons are accepted and made lovely to God, Rom. v. 19, and of sincerity in our actions in place of perfection, whereby they are also accepted, Psal. cxix. 6; for, saith Paul, speaking of the elect, "He hath made us accepted."

8. That same grace, free favour, and good-will, which moved God to elect us before time, moveth him also to make us accepted, lovely, and well-pleasing to himself, and to accept of us in time; whence it followeth, that as the eternal decree of election was most free, and in nothing dependent on our works, so that work of God whereby he draweth souls out of nature, clotheth them with

Christ's righteousness, and bestoweth grace upon them, is wholly free also as to us, and cometh only from his most free grace, without respect had to any worth of ours: for, saith he, "Wherein," or, in which grace, whereof he spoke formerly as the fountain-cause of election, "he hath made us accepted."

9. Christ is beloved and accepted by the Father, being considered even as Mediator, in so far as that he was sent and intrusted by the Father to discharge that office, John v. 30, and carried himself in the discharge of it according to what was enjoined by the Father, Heb. x. 7, and did finish all, in order to the redemption of the elect, which he had undertaken to the Father, John xix. 30; for the apostle, speaking of Christ as Mediator, calleth him "Beloved: He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

10. Christ, as Mediator, is so much beloved of the Father, that all the elect, being once effectually called, are made lovely and acceptable to God through him: neither doth God accept of the persons or actions of any, but through him who is "Jehovah our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6, and being laid hold upon by faith, we, who are in ourselves unrighteous, are made righteous, 2 Cor. v. 21, and the sinful failings of our best actions hid and covered in him; so that both our persons and actions are accepted: "For he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

11. God's free grace and Christ's merit are no ways inconsistent, but do well agree together, as the procuring causes of our acceptance and reconciliation with God: for though Christ hath purchased a state of favour and friendship unto us by the payment of an equivalent price, yet all cometh from grace unto us; in so far as it was grace in God that made him give his Son to die for us, John iii. 16; so it was grace in Christ that made him undertake to die in our place, John x. 18; and it is no less of free grace that the price paid by him is accepted of in our name, Job xxxiii. 24: for the apostle doth mention "grace" and Christ's merit as the joint causes of our being accepted; "Wherein," or, in which grace, "he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

VER. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

The apostle having already spoken of those spiritual blessings, mentioned ver. 3, as they were prepared and appointed for believers in God's eternal decree of election, doth now speak of them as they were purchased by Christ in that great and marvellous work of redemption, by showing, first, that Jesus Christ hath given a ransom, even his own blood, in satisfaction to divine justice for our wrongs; whence floweth our redemption from sin, Satan, and God's wrath, which is begun here, Rom. vi. 22, and shall be completed hereafter at the last day, Rom. viii. 23. Secondly, he explaineth this great benefit of redemption by "the forgiveness of our sins" in justification, which is an effect of redemption, as "redemption" is taken for the laying down of the price by Christ, and a principal part of

redemption, as it speaketh our actual delivery and freedom through virtue of that price. Thirdly, he sheweth the impulsive cause which moved God to bestow such a benefit, even the riches of that same grace and free favour in God formerly spoken of. By all which he carrieth on his main scope, which is, to confirm those Ephesians that salvation and all the steps leading to it do flow from God's free grace in Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. All men, the elect themselves not being excepted, are by nature under slavery and bondage to sin, John viii. 34, Satan, Eph. ii. 2, and to God's wrath, John iii. 36; for redemption presupposeth bondage: "In whom we have redemption."

2. There was no delivery to be had from this bondage by prayer and entreaty, nor by exchange of prisoners, as in wars, nor yet by strong hand and mere force; but by paying of a price, not to Satan, who detaineth the elect in slavery, as a rigid tyrant, or merciless jailer, from whom they are delivered by force, Heb. ii. 14; but to God, Eph. iii. 2, whose justice was wronged by the sins of the elect, and therefore behoved to be satisfied; for "redemption," according to the force of the original word, is a delivery by ransom and price.

3. Jesus Christ is that person by whom we have redemption from the forementioned slavery; this work, by the counsel of the whole Trinity, being put over upon him, as one who not only had right, both of property to redeem the elect being his creatures, Heb. i. 10, and of kindred, Lev. xxv. 48, as being our brother, and of the same nature with us, Heb. ii. 14; but was also fitted to be our Redeemer, (a price, to wit, his human nature, being put in his hands to lay down, Heb. x. 5,) and was able to redeem, as being also God, whereby his sufferings as man became a ransom of infinite value, Acts xx. 28; for by saying "In whom," or, in Christ, "we have redemption," he saith, that we have it by him.

4. We have this redemption not only by Christ, but also in him; which holdeth also in forgiveness of sins, he being the common storehouse wherein the elect shall have all their spiritual blessings treasured up, even before they take their spiritual being from him, or get those blessings actually applied unto them, as Adam's posterity have their original guiltiness, whence all actual transgressions flow, treasured up in him, before they take their natural being from him, Rom. v. 12: as also because this redemption and the fruits of it are not actually applied to the elect until they be in Christ, and by faith united to him, John iii. 36; for saith he, "In whom," meaning Christ, "we have redemption and forgiveness of sins."

5. The wrong done to infinite justice by our sin was so great, that nothing performed by Christ could be a sufficient ransom in order to our redemption, except he had crowned all his other actions and sufferings by laying down his life and undergoing a bloody and violent death: for, "We have redemption through his blood," to wit, not as excluding his former obedience, Rom. v. 18, 19, nor yet his other sufferings, especially his soul-sufferings, Isa. liii. 10; but as

being the head-stone and completing of all, John xix. 30.

6. Sin is a debt, as being a wrong done against God, obliging the sinner to repair God in his honour, or otherways to underlie the wrath of a provoked God for ever, Rom. vi. 23; for the word "forgiveness" in the original, and as it is used in Scripture, is taken from those who are loosed out of a prison for debt; "The forgiveness of sins."

7. There is no delivery from this debt of sin, and obligation to wrath because of sin, but by pardon and forgiveness. It is an infinite debt, and so cannot be satisfied by finite creatures: for thus doth Paul express the way how the debt is removed, even "by forgiveness of sins."

8. Though the guilt of sin be removed by forgiveness, and therefore freely, as to us; yet, that sin might be thus freely forgiven with the good leave of provoked justice, forgiveness of sin was purchased at a dear rate by Christ: for, as we have "redemption through his blood," so also "forgiveness of sins."

9. Jesus Christ hath this rich treasure of forgiveness of sins, which he hath bought by his blood, laid up in himself; so that whensoever a sinner sensible of this weighty debt doth lay hold upon Christ by faith, and is thereby engrafted in him, his sins are freely pardoned, and his debt remitted: for, "In him," saith he, "we have forgiveness of sins."

10. As that grace, favour, and good-will which God manifested in the salvation of sinners, is a rich, copious, and abundant grace; so nothing argueth the riches of this grace more, than that from it do flow such excellent effects, as the giving of Christ, the Son of God, to redeem slaves and rebels, together with forgiveness of sins; they being infinite wrongs, and there being many of them in every pardoned sinner, Psal. xix. 12; and those not only ordinary infirmities, but sometimes also heinous transgressions, Psal. li. 14; and yet free grace pardoneth all, and this not only in one, but in all believers, in all ages, and doth yet remain as full and overflowing in God to pardon self-condemned sinners as ever: all which doth argue no less than a copious, rich, and abundant grace; for the apostle, speaking of grace with relation to those two, "redemption" and "forgiveness" which flow from it, he calleth it a rich grace; "According to the riches of his grace," saith he.

VER. 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

The apostle doth, thirdly, speak of those spiritual blessings which were prepared in election and purchased in that excellent work of redemption, as they are conveyed and applied unto the elect in their effectual calling; whereby he carrieth on his forementioned scope, in showing, that as God did give evident proofs of his free grace and favour in all the former steps tending to salvation, so he had manifested the abundant riches of his grace in the effectual calling of those Ephesians, in so far as his eternal love, which was before always hid in a decree, did no longer con-

tain itself, but overflowed in its effects "towards them," or in them, as the word may be rendered; which effects, wrought by God's grace in them, he sheweth to be "all wisdom and prudence," under which are comprehended all the saving graces of God's Spirit in believers, if we take, as we safely may take "wisdom" for the saving knowledge of divine mysteries, and of such religious truths as are only to be believed and fall not under practice; and "prudence" for that grace and virtue whereby we know our respective duties both to God and man, and our actions and practices are ruled and ordered according to the prescript of God's word: for so the words are taken, Col. i. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whosoever are elected from eternity, and for whomsoever Christ did give a ransom to provoke justice in the fulness of time, all such in God's due time have the effects of God's eternal love, and of the price paid by Christ, applied unto them and wrought in them, even the saving graces of God's Spirit: for upon those Ephesians who were elected, ver. 4, and redeemed, ver. 7, did God bestow the gracious effects of his eternal love, by working saving grace in them: "He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence."

2. That those spiritual blessings which were prepared for us in election and purchased in the work of redemption, are applied unto us, and we made actually to partake of them, it is the alone work of God in our effectual calling; there being not so much as either power or good-will in us, who by nature are dead in sins and trespasses, to accept of Christ, or of any thing purchased by him, until God do quicken us: for the apostle, showing how the Ephesians were made partakers of those blessings, he ascribeth this work wholly to God, making them but mere patients in it; "He hath abounded towards us," or in us; as a full fountain runneth over and watereth the adjacent ground.

3. As the same free grace, and nothing else, which moved God to elect us before time, and send his Son to redeem us in time, doth make him also in our effectual calling to work in us those graces, and to give unto us an actual right to all those spiritual blessings which we were chosen unto, and which were purchased for us; so nothing less than abundant and overflowing grace is hereby made manifest to be in God, considering that there is not only a simple want of good-will, but also an utter averseness from closing with his gracious offer, Matt. xxiii. 37, and that not only there is nothing in the elect before effectual calling more than in the reprobate, which might move God to bestow those excellent blessings upon them, but also much to scare him from ever meddling with them, Ezek. xvi. 3, &c. unless where sin abounded grace did much more abound, Rom. v. 20; for the apostle, speaking of God's bestowing grace upon the elect Ephesians, doth ascribe his so doing to his abounding grace; "Wherein," or, in which grace, (formerly spoken of) "he hath abounded towards us."

4. All men by nature are destitute of saving wisdom, that is, the saving knowledge of divine

mysteries, and things heavenly; seeing there be many such things the light of nature revealeth nothing of, Matt. xvi. 17. And though the light of Scripture doth reveal them, yet the natural man cannot look upon them as real truths, 1 Cor. ii. 14, and so as thoroughly to venture his salvation upon them, John v. 40; for he sheweth that at their effectual calling, God did "abound towards them in wisdom," importing, that until then they had it not.

5. Though the Lord doth not bestow upon all whom he effectually calleth, the same measure of saving knowledge, 1 Cor. xii. 4, yet he bestoweth upon every one so much as is necessary unto salvation, and as doth serve for an earnest of that full and perfect knowledge of God, which they shall enjoy hereafter; for, saith he, "He hath abounded towards us in wisdom."

6. All men by nature are also deprived of saving prudence, there being many duties which the natural man cannot be convinced of to be duties, Matt. v. 29, 39, 44, and many things required to the acceptable performance of every duty, Rom. xiv. 23, Col. iii. 17, the necessity whereof he can be as little convinced of; but chiefly, there being such impotency and disorder in his will and affections, that he can least of all practise according to what he knoweth of his duties, Gen. vi. 5; for he sheweth that, at their effectual calling, God did "abound towards them in prudence," thereby importing, that until then they had nothing of that grace.

7. As God bestoweth this grace of prudence in some measure upon every one whom he effectually calleth, so wisdom and prudence, if they be sanctified and saving, go always together; a man cannot believe well, except he also live well; though, to speak of them otherwise, as they are not saving graces, but only civil and moral virtues, they may be and often are separated: for "He hath abounded in wisdom and prudence," saith he.

8. Though God doth not perfect the work of grace in the elect at the first instant of their conversion, but carrieth it on by degrees towards perfection until death, Phil. i. 6, yet even then he bestoweth the seeds and habits of every grace and saving virtue upon them. This new man of grace is not lame, nor wanteth any of his members, Gal. iii. 10; for therefore, saith Paul, "He hath abounded in all wisdom and prudence."

VER. 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

The apostle doth illustrate the former benefit of effectual calling, from the mean which God maketh use of for bringing of it about, to wit, his making known the doctrine of the gospel, which is here called a mystery, (as elsewhere, see Eph. vi. 19, 1 Tim. iii. 16,) that is, according to the use of the word in Scripture, a religious and sacred secret; and this also, he sheweth, doth flow from the same good pleasure and free grace formerly spoken of, the manifesting whereof was firmly resolved upon by God in his eternal

purpose, being moved by nothing so to do without himself.

DOCTRINES.

1. The gospel, or doctrine of salvation through free grace, is a sacred secret, transcending the reach of ordinary knowledge, a very mystery, even such as nothing could be known of it either by man or angels, before it was revealed, Eph. iii. 10, and such as was but sparingly revealed before Christ's incarnation, even to the Jews only, and to some few proselytes, Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20, and such as remaineth a thing hid, even after it is revealed, unto natural men whose minds the god of this world hath blinded; so, as though they can discourse of and preach the gospel, Matt. vii. 22, yet they do not believe it, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Yea, and it is a mystery, even to believers themselves, if their knowledge here be compared with what it shall be hereafter, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; for, by the "mystery of his will," he understandeth the gospel, and chiefly, as it was now clearly manifested both to Jew and Gentile, chap. iii. 6.

2. This mystery of the gospel now revealed, containeth and manifesteth God's will concerning the salvation of lost sinners, though not his secret will or decree, concerning those whom in particular he intendeth to save, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Yet his revealed will, holding forth the way of our duty, and the course condescended upon, by which, and not otherwise, sinners shall be saved; for hence it is called "the mystery of his will."

3. The ordinary mean whereby God doth call the elect effectually, and convey the graces of his Spirit unto their graceless hearts, is the revelation of the gospel, and his making of it known, chiefly by the public preaching thereof, Rom. x. 14, 15; for the apostle, having already spoken of God's bestowing all saving grace upon them, doth here condescend upon the mean made use of by him in that work; "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will."

4. There is nothing which moveth God to reveal his gospel unto one people, and not to another, or more obscurely to one, and more clearly unto another, but only his own good will and pleasure so to do; neither doth the Lord any thing contrary to justice hereby, seeing he is not obliged to send the gospel unto any, Rom. xi. 35, and all have more knowledge of God by nature than they make good use of, Rom. i. 21; for this alone is here given as the reason of his making known the mystery of his will, even "according to his good pleasure."

5. So careful is God to maintain the interest of his free grace in our salvation, as being the only supreme and fountain cause thereof, that he thinketh it not sufficient once to assert, in the general, that salvation and all the means and steps tending towards it, do flow from his free grace, but that this be again and again inculcated, and (all the particular steps which lead to salvation being condescended upon) that his free grace, favour, and good-will, be held out as the fountain of each step in particular; for the apostle doth so, and that by an heavenly and divine artifice, sliding down from one step to another, from election to redemption, and from redemp-

tion to effectual calling, and from effectual calling unto God's bestowing the outward mean of salvation, the gospel; not only ascribing all to God's free grace, but making grace the mid-link of the chain, whereby he joineeth the several parts of his discourse together; so ver. 8, "Wherein he abounded;" and here, "According to the good pleasure of his will," and "which he purposed in himself," as having no cause without himself to set him on work.

6. As the decrees of God are firm, fixed, and unchangeable, so he doth nothing in the matter of man's salvation, even to the least circumstance, but what he hath decreed to do; which (as will appear from ver. 11) doth hold in all other things which God doth; for by God's "purpose" is meant his eternal decree with respect had to its stability and unchangeableness, there being neither want of foresight, nor of power in God, to occasion the alteration of his purpose, which are the causes why men are frequently necessitated to alter theirs; and this purpose and decree is spoken of here as the rule according to which God of his good pleasure did make known the mystery of his will unto those Ephesians, in order to their salvation; "Which he had purposed in himself," saith he.

VER. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Here is the intended effect which God did aim at in his gracious purpose of making fully known the mystery of the gospel, both to Jew and Gentile, to wit, that at the full time and season which God had dispensed, measured out, and pitched upon, as most fitting for the business in hand, (to wit, the time of Christ's incarnation and sufferings, Gal. iv. 4.) he might gather together in Christ all his own elect (whether already glorified or yet upon earth) who before were separated from God, and one from another, and might make them one with God, being united with Christ, their head, by faith, Eph. iii. 17, and one among themselves, being united by love, Col. iii. 14. Now the apostle affirmeth this gathering of all the elect, was to be in the fulness of times; for though many of them were already actually gathered and glorified, to wit, the things in heaven before that time; yet the exhibition of that, by virtue whereof they were gathered, was at and not before that time, to wit, the time of Christ's incarnation, obedience, and sufferings, Heb. ix. 15.

DOCTRINES.

1. All mankind by nature, and being considered in themselves, are under a fearful dissipation and scattering: sin hath rent and separated them from God, from man, and from the blessed angels; for gathering presupposeth a foregoing scattering, and the word rendered "gather together in one," being taken from a word which signifieth the head of a natural body, or a short sum of a sparse discourse, and

so signifying here to gather together under one head, to wit, Christ, and unto one sum and body amongst themselves, it supposeth that they are separated from God, from Christ, one from another, and from the angels also; for they were to be gathered into one body with those. "That he might gather together in one," &c.

2. The Lord hath not left all mankind in this woeful separation and scattered condition, but as he hath firmly purposed and decreed from all eternity, so in time he setteth about to gather together some of scattered mankind, and to unite them to himself, one to another, and to the blessed angels; for the word rendered "to gather," implieth a gathering unto all these, as is said; "And he hath purposed in himself,—that he might gather together in one."

3. The gathering together of the scattered elect, and making of them one with God and among themselves, doth not depend upon the choice of their own free will, which could do no other but refuse to be gathered, Matt. xxiii. 37, and so Christ should not have seen of the travail of his soul and been satisfied, contrary to what is promised, Isa. liii. 11; but upon the fixed and unchangeable purpose of God, which engageth his omnipotency to make them willing to be gathered, Psa. cx. 3, and therefore they shall be infallibly gathered; for the apostle, as appears from the context, maketh this gathering depend on God's purpose; "He hath purposed in himself,—that he might gather together in one."

4. It is only God, who by his omnipotent power doth gather together the scattered elect, and maketh them one with himself, and with one another in himself. We do so much love to wander, Jer. xiv. 10, that we would live and die estranged from God, if the Lord by strong hand did not reclaim us from our wanderings; for, saith Paul, "He hath purposed in himself,—that he might gather together in one."

5. The preaching of the gospel, and making known that blessed mystery, is the mean which God maketh use of in this work of gathering the scattered elect, because, though our actual gathering be an act of God's omnipotent power, yet he dealeth with us as with rational creatures, by giving us an offer of his friendship, commanding us to accept of it as it is offered, and in the meantime sending forth his power with the command, whereby he maketh us to accept, Acts xvi. 14; for, as is clear from the connexion, God's end intended in making known the mystery of his will is, "That he might gather together in one."

6. As God is the great Master of his own house and family, which is the church, to whom he dispenseth and distributeth all her mercies, comforts, and crosses, with no less, yea, with infinitely greater care, wisdom, and foresight, than any man doth care, provide for, and govern his own family; so, among other things, he dispenseth and ordereth times and seasons for his church, as not only having fixed in his eternal counsel the general periods of the church's time, how long the church should be in her state of infancy, how long under the bondage of the law, and how long she shall continue in her more grown and perfect age under the gospel, but also the time and sea-

son for bestowing of particular mercies, and inflicting corrections and chastisements; for the word rendered "dispensation," signifieth the way of administrating the affairs of the family by the master thereof, and the times come under those things which are administrated by God; "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times."

7. As every time chosen of God for bestowing of any mercy, is the full and fittest time for his bestowing of it; so the time of Christ's incarnation is in a special manner the full time, and fulness of time, and that not only because it was that full time which God had appointed in his decree, and, for reasons known to his own unsearchable wisdom, condescended upon as the most fitting time for that great work, but also because all the foregoing prophecies, promises, and types of the Messiah were fulfilled in those times, Luke xxiv. 27, and the will of God concerning man's salvation was then, and not till then, fully revealed, Heb. i. 2; for the apostle calleth those times "the fulness of times;" "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times."

8. Though the benefits purchased by Christ, and particularly that of effectual calling, and gathering together unto God those whom sin did separate from him, be intended for and accordingly doth light only upon few, Matt. vii. 14; yet the gospel and promise by which Christ and the benefits purchased by him are revealed, is drawn up in the most comprehensive expressions; and this of purpose, that none may hereby be excluded from laying hold upon that gracious offer, but such as do exclude themselves, John v. 40; for, saith he, "that he might gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth:" by which broad expressions are meant only the elect, (for there is an universality and world even of those, 2 Cor. v. 19,) and not all the creatures, not devils or reprobates, John xvii. 9; yea, to speak properly, nor yet the elect angels, who being never separated from God by sin, cannot be gathered to him by Christ, though they may improperly and in some respects be said to be so; to wit, because of those advantages which they have by Christ, as that they are now most perfectly and inseparably united with God, without hazard of being separated from him, Matt. xviii. 10, and have attained the knowledge of that wonderful plot of man's salvation through Jesus Christ, which was a mystery even to them, Eph. iii. 10, and a greater measure of joy than formerly they had, upon Christ's converting and saving of lost sinners, Luke xv. 7, 10.

9. All who belong to God's purpose of election, and who are or shall be gathered together in Christ, are either in heaven or earth. Paul knew no purgatory, or third place, for the souls of the elect to go unto after death, to endure the temporal punishment due to their sin; for he divideth those "all things," which were to be gathered, into "things in heaven," and "things on earth."

10. There is a union betwixt the saints departed now in heaven, and those who are yet alive upon the earth, so as they make up one mystical body under one head, Christ, to whom the saints departed are united, (though not by faith, 1 Cor. xiii. 10,) yet by sense, as we are

united to him by faith; and as they are united to Christ, so also one to another, and to us by love; for "charity never faileth," 1 Cor. xiii. 8. From which union there floweth a communion betwixt them and us, whereby they do pray for the church in general, Rev. vi. 10, (though not for the particular conditions and persons of men upon earth, whereof they are ignorant, Isa. lxiii. 16,) and the godly upon earth do in heart and affection converse with them in heaven, Phil. iii. 30, desiring continually to be dissolved and to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23, (though they are not to pray unto them, or give them religious worship, Rev. xix. 10,) for, saith he, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, things in heaven, and things on earth."

11. Jesus Christ is that person, in and by whom we are gathered together unto God by faith in him, and to the angels, and also among ourselves by the grace of love: he having united the two dissentient parties, God and man, in his own person, Matt. i. 23, and having satisfied justice for that wrong which caused the rent, Isa. liii. 5, and working in us by his Spirit those graces of faith and love whereby we are made one with God and among ourselves, Acts v. 31, and having by his death taken away that wall of partition and enmity which was betwixt Jew and Gentile, Eph. ii. 14—16; it being also necessary that we be in by faith, before we be united to God through him; for the apostle is much delighted with this truth himself, and would so gladly have it well known and believed by others, that he doth inculcate it twice in this one verse, "That he might gather together all things in Christ," and again, "even in him."

VER. 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

The apostle having hitherto spoken of all the elect in general, doth now make application of the former doctrine, first, to the Jews, and next to the Gentiles: and hereby he doth yet further, and thirdly, enforce the forementioned scope, while he sheweth in effect that the prerogative of the Jews above the Gentiles made not grace the less free to them, and that nothing which the Gentiles could pretend to beyond the Jews, made it less free to them either. And, first, he applyeth it unto the Jews, whereof Paul was one; and therefore he speaketh of them in the first person, "we." And, first, he sheweth, that they, to wit, believers among them, (as is explained, ver. 12,) had in Christ and by virtue of his merit and intercession, obtained an inheritance, to wit, of heaven and glory, Col. i. 12, and by consequence all the forementioned blessings which lead to it; and this not from their own merit or free choice, but freely and as it were by lot, wherein least of man is seen; for the word signifieth, "to obtain an inheritance by lot," in allusion to the division of the land of Canaan

among the tribes, which was by lot, Josh. xiv. 2. Secondly, he sheweth the reason why they had obtained this inheritance, not their own worth, but because God had predestinated them to it in his unchangeable decree of election, and withal doth clear, that God did call them freely and according to his purpose, to the enjoying of this inheritance, because he worketh all things according to his most wise and free purpose, and therefore this also, ver. 11. And, thirdly, he expresseth the end which the Lord proposed to himself in calling them to enjoy this inheritance, even that thereby his glorious attributes manifested in that work might be acknowledged and praised, especially by them whom he had called, whom he describeth from this, that they were the first who trusted or hoped in Christ; for as the gospel was first preached among the Jews, Matt. x. 6, Acts xiii. 46, so many among them did embrace the gospel, and were converted by it at the first, and before there were any considerable number of converts among the Gentiles, ver. 12.

From ver. 11, learn, 1. It is the duty of Christian ministers, as to preach sound doctrine, so to make prudent application thereof to the several sorts and conditions of hearers: for the life of preaching is in pertinent and lively application, in so far as if the word be left unapplied by the preacher, people will either not apply it all, or otherwise misapply it, by taking to themselves that which belongeth not to them: therefore the apostle, having spoken of the freedom of God's grace towards all the elect in general, doth make particular instance of the freedom of it, first, in the Jews here, and next, in the Gentiles, ver. 13, 14. "In whom also we have obtained."

2. As believers are God's portion and part of the world, even the lot of his inheritance; so they do obtain from him a lot and share in an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, 1 Pet. i. 4; for the word rendered, "we have obtained an inheritance," may either signify, that they were taken for a lot and inheritance passively, or that they had gotten a lot and inheritance actively.

3. Every believer hath already obtained this glorious, excellent, and heavenly inheritance, though not in personal complete possession, 2 Cor. v. 6; yet, by right, John iii. 16, in begun possession, John xvii. 2, 3, and by complete possession in their head, Christ, Eph. ii. 6; for the apostle speaketh in the bypast time, "We have obtained an inheritance."

4. This heavenly inheritance doth come to believers not by their own merit or worth, but freely and without their deserving or choice, as those things which come by lot: all the causes bringing it about, whether God's eternal electing love, or Christ's merit and the application of it, are free as to us, and were set on work without any active influence as from us; for, as we show, the word signifieth to obtain by lot, and therefore freely; "We have obtained an inheritance."

5. Jesus Christ the mediator is that person, in whom believers have this heavenly inheritance: as they have all their other spiritual

blessings leading to heaven in him; so also heaven itself, he hath purchased it, Heb. ix. 12. He maketh us lay hold upon it by faith, when it is offered in the promise, Johu xii. 32; we must be in him before we get a right to it, and therefore he is the way to heaven, John xiv. 6. He hath taken possession of heaven in our name, as our attorney, John xiv. 2, 3; for, saith he, "In whom," which relateth to Christ, "we have obtained an inheritance."

6. Those who seem the worthiest people of any other, do come to heaven no other way than the most unworthy, that is, freely, and as it were by lot: for he saith, "We also," that is, even we Jews, who might seem to have somewhat whereon to rely in ourselves, "have obtained an inheritance freely."

7. As none come to heaven, but such as are from eternity predestinated to it by God; so all those things, whether they be mercies, Gen. i. 20, or crosses, Amos iii. 6, which come as it were by chance to us, or without our foresight, are well foreseen, and wisely ordered by God: for he mentioneth predestination, and God's purpose to bestow this inheritance, which came to them as it were by lot, and without their foresight; "We have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose."

8. The providence of God is extended to all things whatsoever, neither is there any thing which falleth not under his efficacious working: he not only gave a being unto all things created at the beginning, Gen. i. 1, but doth continue them in their being, Heb. i. 3; and concurrereth with all the second causes in their working, Acts xvii. 28; yet so, as God is not the author of sin: because, though the real action, to which sin adhereth, be from God, Job i. 21; yet, the deformity of that action, in so far as it is a transgression of the law, seeing it is not a real being, but a deficiency from being; no real effect, but a defect. Therefore it is not from God, but from the sinner only: for, saith he, speaking of God, "Who worketh all things:" which cannot be restricted to the fore-mentioned blessings, but must be extended to all things whatsoever, seeing it is clear the apostle doth argue from the general to the particular, "He worketh all things so," and therefore those things also.

9. As God is an absolute worker, sovereign Lord of all his actions, and bound to give a reason unto none for what he doth, his will being his only rule by which he worketh; so his will is always joined with, and founded upon the light of counsel and wisdom; and therefore he can will nothing but what is equitable and just: for the apostle holdeth forth those two principles from which God's working doth flow, infinite wisdom, pointed at in the word counsel, and absolute freedom and sovereignty over his actions, pointed at in the word will: "Who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will."

10. As God doth in time work all things; so from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his will, he hath ordained whatever cometh to pass: yet so, as violence is not thereby offered to the will of the creatures, nor the liberty of second causes, especially of the wills of men and angels, taken away, but rather esta-

blished, Acts ii. 23, and iv. 27, 28; for, saith he, "Who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will," that is, as he hath most wisely and freely decreed.

11. Though counsel and advice be ascribed to God in his decrees and works, in so far as there is nothing willed or wrought by him, but what is well, wisely, and most righteously done; yet, we would advert, lest we attribute to God upon this ground any thing favouring of imperfection, as if he did consult or deliberate concerning things to be done, as men do from ignorance, or doubtfulness of what is most convenient, and therefore do first consult and advise about the best expedient, and then make choice accordingly; there is no such doubtful inquisition or previous deliberation in God in order to his working; his will alone is instead of all counsel and deliberation, seeing his most holy will hath all equity, wisdom, and righteousness joined with it, so that there is nothing more required to make an action be well, wisely, and advisedly done, than that it be willed of God: for the apostle saith not, "He worketh all things according to the will of his counsel," as if counsel and deliberation went before, and the choice of the will followed after; but, "after the counsel of his will," showing, that his willing of a thing to be done, is in place of all further consultation about it.

From ver. 12. learn, 1. As God's giving grace unto graceless sinners, his drawing them out of nature to the state of grace, and bestowing the heavenly inheritance upon them, is a work which setteth forth the glory of God's most excellent attributes, of merey, goodness, justice, power and beneficence, and giveth occasions unto beholders to set forth his praise in all those, though the man himself upon whom this work is wrought were silent, the very work should speak for itself; so it is the duty of those especially whom God hath so dealt with, to take occasion from his gracious work in them to set forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness to his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. They are not always to dwell upon complaints of themselves, but sometimes should mount up in the high thoughts of his commendation and praises: for this is the end designed by God in calling them to obtain this inheritance, even that we should be to the praise of his glory: which words may be taken both passively, the praise of his glory was to be manifested in them; and actively, they themselves were to set forth his praises.

2. The more early a man doth close with Christ and embrace him by faith, as he is offered in the gospel, the less he doth protract and delay his so doing, the more of praise to God's glorious attributes is manifested in him, and the more of obligation doth lie upon him to set forth God's praises, who hath so early broken the yoke of his slavery to sin and Satan: for their trusting, and first trusting in Christ before others, is spoken of as a mean conducing to his praise, and engaging them to it; "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

3. That any do believe in Christ at all, and that some do believe in him sooner, and others

later, dependeth not upon any difference in the persons themselves, but upon God's purpose, counsel, and good pleasure: for their trusting, and first trusting before others, is subservient to the end, which was proposed by God, to wit, the praise of his glory. Now the necessary means, and the end intended, do depend upon one and the same purpose, so that if God have decreed the end, he must also have decreed the means tending to that end; "That we might be to his praise, who first trusted in Christ."

4. The gospel, when it is preached to a people, though never so godless and obdured, will not want its own saving fruits among some of those to whom it is preached: God nseth not to send his gospel unto a people of purpose to harden all, and to make them inexcusable; but because there are some belonging unto the election of grace, who are to be converted by it: for as the gospel was to be preached first to the Jews, because of the promise made to the fathers, Rom. xv. 8; so when it was preached it wanted not fruits among them, though they were a people to be cast off, enemies unto all good, had crucified the Lord Jesus, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16; for they were of those Jews "who first trusted in Christ."

5. It is no small privilege for any, whether person or people, to be trusters in Christ, before others, it is a matter of their commendation, Rom. xvi. 5, it glorifieth God, in so far as their example and experience may prove an encouraging motive unto others, 1 Tim. i. 16; it carrieth with it several advantages: for the sooner a man doth close with Christ, he will get that work done the more easily, he is the sooner freed from slavery to Satan and his own lusts, he is the sooner capacitated to do the more service to God, and his great concerns are the sooner out of hazards: for Paul maketh it a prerogative and privilege, which the Jews had beyond the Gentiles, even "that they first trusted or hoped in Christ."

VER. 13. In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The apostle applieth the former doctrine, in the second place, to the believing Gentiles in the person of those Ephesians, that hereby he may show they were as much in the debt of God's free grace for salvation, as the believing Jews. In order to which he holdeth forth, first, the benefit which they had received from Christ, even the same which he showed was bestowed upon the believing Jews, to wit, the heavenly inheritance, and all those other spiritual blessings which lead to it: for as it is necessary that some word be added to the beginning of this verse for making good sense; so it seemeth the word *trusted*, taken from the close of ver. 12, cannot

be it: for the word rendered there, "first trusted," is but one in the original, and cannot be applied unto the Gentiles, as not being the first who trusted in Christ; and therefore it is safer, and more apposite also unto the apostle's scope to repeat that word, (which is, ver. 11.) "have obtained an inheritance," especially seeing he is applying here to the Gentiles, what he had applied there to the Jews; the principal part whereof, and that upon which all the rest spoken of there doth depend, is their obtaining an inheritance. Secondly, he setteth forth the mean whereby they obtained this excellent benefit, even their hearing of the doctrine of the gospel, which he describeth from its excellent nature, as being the word of truth, and from that great good which it revealeth and offereth, even salvation. Thirdly, he mentioneth a work of God's Holy Spirit upon their hearts after they had believed, which is here called sealing, by a metaphor taken from the use of seals and signets among men, which are chiefly used for putting a difference betwixt true writs, and those which are counterfeit; so that this work here called sealing, did serve to evidence the truth and reality of somewhat which might otherwise have been questioned, and particularly, with relation to the apostle's present scope, it did serve to evidence the reality of their right to the glorious inheritance, the truths of the gospel, and the sincerity of their closing with, and believing of the gospel: now the work of God's Spirit, which maketh all this evident, and therefore hath the name of sealing, is mainly his renewing and sanctifying work, and especially his carrying on of that work, whereby he imprinteth the image of himself, which is holiness, Eph. iv. 24, upon believers, as an impression of the draughts and lineaments of the seal are by sealing put upon the thing sealed; so, 2 Tim. ii. 19, the grace of sanctification and departing from evil is called a seal, though those other works of God's Spirit in believers, whereby he giveth them sense of his presence, comfort, and joy unspeakable flowing from it, and full assurance may be looked upon as less principal parts of this seal. Fourthly, ver. 14, by the metaphor of an earnest, which is used among merchants for ratifying of their bargains, he sheweth a use, for which the bestowing of the Holy Spirit upon them, and his sealing of them by his sanctifying grace, did serve even to be an earnest of the heavenly inheritance, the full possession whereof being delayed until the last day, God gave unto them his Holy Spirit with his saving graces, as an earnest or some small beginnings, and a part of that glory which shall then be revealed; that hereby he might assure them of their obtaining the whole in due season. Fifthly, he sheweth the date and time how long they were to content themselves with the earnest, even until "the redemption of the purchased possession," that is, until the day of judgment, at which time those who are purchased by the blood of Christ, and are his possession and peculiar people, shall obtain complete redemption and full delivery from sin and misery; in which sense redemption is taken, Rom. viii. 23. And sixthly, he sheweth the end which God purposed unto himself in all

this, even the same which he mentioned formerly, ver. 12; to wit, "the praise of his glory."

From the benefit which those Gentiles received, (besides what is marked upon the parallel place, ver. 11,) learn, 1. Though it was the prerogative of the Jews above the Gentiles that Christ was first preached unto them, and accordingly some of them did first trust in him, (see ver. 12,) yet God hath made both Jew and Gentile equally to partake of all other things, as well of those which concern salvation itself, as of the means and way of attaining to it: for the same Christ, the same free-gifted inheritance through Christ, and the same gospel which was bestowed upon the Jews, are also bestowed upon the believing Gentiles; "In whom ye also have obtained an inheritance," saith he.

2. It is a thing highly observable, and much to be taken notice of, that the Gentiles, who were profane dogs, Matt. xv. 26, not a people, Deut. xxxii. 21, without God, (chap. ii. ver. 12,) should be set down at the children's table, and have full access to free grace and salvation, and all spiritual blessings tending to salvation equally with the Jews, who were God's only people, separated to him above all people, Exod. xix. 5, to whom did pertain the adoption, glory, covenants, &c. Rom. ix. 4; for Paul cannot speak of this without an also, which is a note of exaggeration, and heighteneth the purpose, as a thing very observable; "In whom ye also have obtained an inheritance."

From the mean whereby they attained this excellent benefit, learn, 1. The hearing of the gospel, which supposeth the public preaching of it, Rom. x. 14, is the ordinary mean whereby faith is wrought, and consequently a right is conveyed unto the heavenly inheritance, in so far as the gospel so preached doth not only propound and make known to the understanding the object of saving faith, which was before hid; but the Lord also, at, or after the hearing of this gospel preached, doth work the grace of faith in the hearts of the elect, Acts xvi. 14, for, saith he, "Ye obtained an inheritance, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel."

2. The gospel is the word of truth, not only because it containeth nothing but truth, (for so the whole Scripture is the word of truth, Psal. xcix. 9,) but also the truths of the gospel are most excellent truths, as being most remote from ordinary knowledge, Matt. xvi. 17, most profitable to lost sinners, Tit. ii. 11, and do manifest the praise of God's glorious attributes, Luke ii. 14, more than any other truths: besides, the gospel doth clearly hold forth the truth and substance of all these dark and legal shadows, John i. 17, for by "the word of truth" he meaneth the gospel, as he presently cleareth; "After ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."

3. As the doctrine of salvation is the doctrine of the gospel, or glad tidings to lost sinners, (for the word rendered gospel, signifieth a glad, or good message,) so the doctrine of the gospel is a doctrine of salvation, as not only revealing salvation, and a possible way for attaining to it, which the law doth not, Gal. iii. 21, but also being the power of God to salvation, Rom. i. 16, and

the mean which God doth bless for making us embrace by faith the offer of salvation, Rom. x. 14, 15, and for working all other saving graces in the elect, Col. i. 6, for the apostle calleth this doctrine "the gospel," or glad tidings, "of salvation."

4. It is not sufficient to know that the gospel is a doctrine of salvation in general, or unto others only; but every one would labour, by the due application of the promises of the gospel unto themselves, to find it a doctrine of salvation to them in particular: for Paul hinteth at so much, while he saith, not simply, "the gospel of salvation," but "of your salvation."

From the Spirit's work of sealing following upon believing, learn, 1. As the gospel preached, and heard, doth not profit unto salvation, except it be believed; so the truths of the gospel, and Jesus Christ, that good thing offered in those truths, is that in the whole word of God which saving faith doth chiefly close with, and rely, and is fully satisfied with: it findeth death in threatenings, a burden of work in precepts, but in Christ and the gospel it findeth the way to heaven made patent, even a way how the sinner may be saved and divine justice not wronged: for the apostle, having spoken before of their hearing the gospel, doth add, "In whom," to wit, Christ; the words may also read, "In which," to wit, the gospel, "ye believed."

2. Though none can actually believe before the Spirit of God come to dwell in them, bringing along his royal train of habitual graces, and the habit of faith amongst the rest, unto the heart with him; and therefore is he called the Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13; yet, upon the actual exercising of the grace of faith, the Spirit of God doth more fully manifest himself to be dwelling in believers, by his carrying on the work of sanctification in them, for their greater comfort, and further strengthening of their faith: for, saith he, "After ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit."

3. Whoever have rightly closed with the gospel, and Christ in the gospel, by believing, will have the grace of sanctification and holiness of life following upon their so doing, as also sometimes some measure of joy, peace, and sensible comfort: for as I cleared, by the seal is meant those graces; and "after ye believed, ye were sealed," saith he.

4. Even real believers have need of confirmation and sealing, as being oftentimes exercised and tossed with several doubts and scruples, both concerning the truth of the gospel, and promise in general, Mark ix. 24, and the reality of their own closing with, and interest in the promise, Psal. lxxxviii. 14, for therefore is it, that after those Ephesians had believed they were sealed, hereby to evidence the truth of the gospel, and the sincerity of their believing the gospel; "After ye believed, ye were sealed."

5. The Lord hath provided, and accordingly doth bestow sufficient means upon believers, whereby all their forementioned doubts may be solved, and they abundantly satisfied; for besides the writing of the promise upon their hearts, and the outward seals of the covenant of grace, or sacraments, which are visibly dispensed by

Christ's ministers, there is an inward seal, to wit, the saving graces of God's Spirit, together with growth and increase in those, imprinted by the Spirit of God upon the hearts of believers in order to their confirmation, although they sometimes cannot perfectly discern, nor exactly take up the draughts and lineaments of it; "After ye believed, ye were sealed."

6. The saving graces of God's Spirit wrought in a believer, and exercised by him in all sorts of holy duties, and especially growth in grace, is a most convincing evidence, not only that the word of the gospel, by which holiness is wrought, is the undoubted truth of God: for this is the witness by water, spoken of 1 John v. 8, there being no other thing but the truth of God able to produce such strange and supernatural effects as those; but also it serveth to evidence the reality of the man's interest in the promise, and of his right to the heavenly inheritance, in whom those saving graces and the fruits of holiness are, seeing holiness of life is the inseparable effect of saving faith and interest in the promise, Acts xv. 9, for by the seal is meant mainly the graces of sanctification, and, as was shown, they get that name: because, as seals do confirm public writs, and make them appear to be authentic; so the saving and sanctifying graces of the Spirit do confirm to those in whom they are, the truth of the gospel, and the sincerity of their faith in Christ; "In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed."

7. Our doubts and scruples, whether concerning the truth of the promise in general, or our own particular interest in the promise, ought not in reason make us suspend our believing in Christ and the promise, until we first be sealed and sanctified, and so receive sufficient confirmation; but on the contrary, we are, first, to set our seal to God's truth, by believing and venturing our salvation upon it, and then we may expect next to have God setting his seal upon our heart in order to our confirmation: for that is the order here set down: "In whom after ye believed, ye were sealed."

8. The sanctifying of our natures, and adorning of our hearts with saving graces, together with any confirmation in the truth of the promise, or of particular interest in the promise which believers receive from these, is the work of God's Spirit only: for it is ascribed to him here, and with relation thereto he is called "the Holy Spirit," not only because he is essentially holy, and very holiness itself, but also the author of sanctification, and of all saving graces in believers, Gal. v. 22, and "the Spirit of promise," not only, because he was promised to be abundantly poured out upon believers under the New Testament, Acts ii. 16, but also his office is to seal and confirm by his gracious operations the promises of the gospel to believers, Rom. viii. 16, "Ye were sealed," saith he, "with the Holy Spirit."

From that use, for which the Holy Spirit with his saving graces was bestowed upon them, learn, 1. As the Spirit of God is a person subsisting, and not a created gift or grace; so this Holy Spirit doth not only bestow his gifts and graces upon believers, but also cometh himself unto them, and dwelleth in them: in so far, as though

he be not personally united with them, as the divine nature is with the human in Christ; yet he is not only with them in his essence and being, as he is present every where, Jer. xxiii. 24, nor yet in respect of his working by a general providence only, as he is present even with wicked men: for in him they live, move, and have their being, Acts xvii. 28, but he resideth in them, as in his own temple, by his special and saving operations, whereby he not only bestoweth upon them the habits of all saving graces at their first conversion, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, but doth also by his immediate, strong, and special influence daily preserve those graces in life, John x. 28—29, actuate them, Phil. ii. 3, and ordinarily maketh them to grow, Hos. xiv. 5; for whereas the word Spirit in the former verse is in the neuter gender, he repeats it here by a masculine relative (which would be better rendered "who" than "which") to show that the Spirit is a person subsisting: "which Spirit," he saith, "is given us for an earnest of our inheritance."

2. Heaven and glory is the only portion and inheritance of believers; all their enjoyments earthly, though never so great, being but mean, fading in themselves, and liable to spoiling and vastation from others, so that this inheritance, which is incorruptible, fadeth not away, and is reserved in the heavens, 1 Pet. i. 4, is only worthy to be looked upon as their inheritance: for the apostle calleth it "our inheritance," by way of excellency; "Which is the earnest of our inheritance."

3. As the right unto this inheritance is made over unto believers, upon their resigning themselves to God by faith, in way of covenant and paction, Isa. lv. 3, so the Lord hath thought it convenient not to give them the possession of it presently upon their right, but to delay it for a season, that in the mean time they may exercise their hope in longing after it, Phil. i. 23, and God may get glory from the heirs of heaven here upon earth, and among earthly men, by being the means of salvation unto some, Matt. v. 16, and of conviction and just condemnation unto others, Heb. xi. 7; for the metaphor of an earnest, used among merchants, when the sum covenanted is not presently given, doth bear so much; "Who is the earnest of our inheritance."

4. As even believers are apt to doubt, if ever the covenanted inheritance shall be bestowed and actually enjoyed by them, so the Lord is most willing to do all which in reason can be required, for removing all doubts of that kind; and more particularly he giveth them an earnest, or a part of this covenanted inheritance in hand, to assure them of his purpose to bestow the whole in due time: for the metaphor of an earnest doth bear this also, the end of giving an earnest being to assure the receiver of the giver's honest purpose to perform all that he hath promised, which otherwise might be called in question; "Who is the earnest of our inheritance."

5. The Spirit of the Lord sealing believers, and those saving graces of the Spirit which he worketh in sealing, do serve for the same uses in relation to the covenant of grace, wherein heaven and glory is promised to believers, for which an earnest doth serve in a civil bargain: for, as

the earnest is a part of the sum, and usually but a small part, and yet may assure the receiver of his obtaining the whole; so the Spirit and his work of grace received here, is begun glory, John xvii. 3, and though but a small part of it, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 13, yet the smallest measure of grace may assure the man who hath it of his obtaining the full possession of glory in the day of the Lord Jesus, Phil. i. 6; hence the apostle calleth the Spirit with his graces "this earnest;" "who is the earnest of our inheritance."

From the time how long the use of this earnest was to continue, learn, 1. As real believers are Christ's possession in whom he dwelleth, Eph. iii. 17, and whom he manureth and maketh fruitful, John xv. 2, so he hath purchased them, to wit, by paying a price to provoked justice, 1 Cor. vi. 20, and by force from Satan their old possessor and master, Heb. ii. 14, 15, and purchased them for this end, that he might possess them: for speaking of believers, he calleth them "a purchased possession."

2. Though the redemption and delivery of believers be already begun, and their bonds loosed in part, Col. i. 13, yet their complete redemption is but to come, to wit, from sin at death, Heb. xii. 23, and from misery, not until the last day; then, and not till then shall their bodies be raised up in glory, and their redemption be full and complete, Rom. viii. 23, for the apostle speaketh of their redemption as of a thing yet to come; "Until the redemption of the purchased possession."

3. As this earnest, even the Holy Spirit with his graces, being once given, cannot totally be lost; so, if this day of redemption were once come, there shall be no further use of an earnest: the covenanted inheritance will then be fully possessed, and consequently no place left for fears or doubts about the obtaining of it; for, he saith, the Spirit was to be an earnest until the redemption, and so he must continue with them until then, but was not to serve for an earnest any longer; "Who is the earnest until the redemption of the purchased possession."

From the end proposed, see what is already observed upon ver. 6, and ver. 12.

VER. 15. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16. Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

The apostle, in the second part of the chapter, taking occasion from what he heard of those Ephesians, breaketh forth in thanksgiving and prayer to God for them, whereby he prosecuteth his main scope; in so far as that by every sentence and word almost, he doth break forth the high esteem which he had of God's free grace in Christ, and thereby doth confirm their faith; besides, that while he prayeth for their perseverance and growth in the faith and knowledge of saving truths, he doth, indirectly at least, excite them to persevere and make progress in the same.

And first, having shown the good report which

was brought unto him of those spiritual graces which were eminent in them, (whereof he instanceth two, which are the sum and compend of all the rest, and doth illustrate them from their principal object, faith in Jesus Christ and love to all the saints) ver. 15, he maketh known unto them what was his exercise upon their behalf, even that (being incited by the consideration of these spiritual blessings bestowed by God upon them, and mentioned ver. 13, 14, and by the report which he had of them, ver. 15,) he made conscience to continue in the duties of thanksgiving and prayer to God for them, ver. 16.

From ver. 15, learn, 1. It is not sufficient that Christ's ministers do press duties upon the Lord's people, having convincingly cleared unto their consciences the equity which is in those duties; but they must also hold forth unto them a copy of that obedience which they so much press, by their own example and practice: for so the apostle, having abundantly cleared, ver. 13, 14, that the Lord's converting and sealing of those Ephesians did call upon them to praise the glory of his grace, he himself doth here put hand to this work; "Wherefore," saith he, "I cease not to give thanks for you."

2. It is a great encouragement to bless the Lord, and to pray unto him in behalf of those who are making conscience of these duties for themselves: for while he saith, "I also give thanks," he supposeth they were doing the like, and that he was encouraged from thence.

3. Grace is like a precious ointment, whose savour cannot be hid; the report of it, where it is in life, will spread, and make his name who hath it savoury unto such as are truly gracious themselves: for Paul, though at a great distance, being now at Rome, "heard of their faith in Jesus Christ, and love to all the saints."

4. It is the duty of Christians to be joyfully reporting and speaking of the grace of God and good which is in others; providing it be wisely done, that is, first, sparingly, and so as not to place all our own religion in speaking of the religion of others. Secondly, not rashly, or without such grounds in the person whom we commend, as charity, at least, may rest upon. Thirdly, impartially, and not factiously crying up some, and decrying others who are equally deserving, Jude 16; for Paul's "hearing of their faith and love," implieth that some had reported to him of that good which was in them.

5. Even in the best churches in those primitive times, who were most commended by the apostles, every one had not faith; and so is it yet, all are not Israel who are of Israel, Rom. ix. 6; for the word rendered "their faith," in the original is, "the faith which is among you;" he could not say positively that all of them had faith, but faith was among them.

6. Saving faith is an excellent fruit of the gospel, preached among a people, without which the word cannot profit, Heb. iv. 2, and by which we are united to Christ, and have right to all the spiritual blessings purchased by Christ, who is the chief object of faith, whom it doth apprehend, as he is offered in the promise; for Paul doth mention their faith in Jesus Christ as an excellent praiseworthy fruit of the gospel, for which he

blesseth God; "After I heard of your faith in Jesus Christ," saith he.

7. The grace of love to our neighbour, with the duties thereof, flowing from love to God in the first place, 1 John iv. 12, is an excellent praiseworthy fruit of the gospel preached among a people; especially when the saints have most of this love, as resembling God most. And when their love is laid forth upon saints, as they are saints, and for the reality or appearance of God in them, and not for other by-respects only, or mainly; and, in a word, when it is extended unto all saints: for Paul doth mention their love to the saints, and to all saints, as another excellent praiseworthy fruit of the gospel, for which he blesseth God; "After I heard of your love unto all the saints."

8. As the graces of faith in Christ and love to the saints are always conjoined, they being in a manner the two legs of a Christian, without any one whereof he cannot walk, and the other is but dead and withered, James ii. 17; so faith in its exercise hath the precedence of love; faith being the fountain from which the streams of love do flow; in so far as faith laying hold upon God's love in Christ, inflameth the heart with love to God; which love to God consisteth in keeping of his commandments, 1 John v. 3, and the chief of God's commands, next unto love to himself, is, that we love our brother, 1 John iv. 21; for the apostle here, as elsewhere, Col. i. 4, 1 Thess. i. 4, conjoineth these two graces, and giveth faith the precedence; "After I heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints."

From ver. 16, learn, 1. As the duties both of thanksgiving and prayer ought to be made conscience of by Christians, so the practice of these two duties do well together; for each of them doth contribute for the help of another; in so far as thanksgiving to God for favours received doth notably tend to suppress that fretting, quarrelling, impatient humour, which often venteth itself against God in our prayers, Psal. lxxvii. 7, compared with x. 11; and the exercise of prayer doth elevate the heart somewhat towards God, and so in some measure warm the affections with love to God, Psal. xxv. 1, and thus disposeth much for the duty of thanksgiving: for the apostle maketh conscience of both those duties, and that jointly; "I cease not to give thanks in my prayers."

2. It is not sufficient for Christians once to begin well, and break off fair in the practice of those duties, but they must continue in them; there being always abiding reasons both for thanksgiving and prayer: and when there is a lazy falling off from the practice of them for a time, it is usually found a task of greater difficulty to begin of new than it was at first: for the apostle saith, "I cease not to give thanks in my prayers:" he "ceased not," to wit, so far as his other necessary employments and duties of his calling did permit: for what we do frequently, and always when occasion offereth, we are said to do it without ceasing.

3. The ministers of Jesus Christ especially ought not to be puffed up with any success which the Lord is pleased to give unto their labours, or sacrifice to their own drag or net, Gal. vi. 13;

but would ascribe the praise thereof to God, who alone maketh his people to profit, Isa. xlviii. 17; for Paul, hearing of their faith and love, "ceased not to give thanks for them to God."

4. As it is the duty of one Christian to pray for another, and especially of a minister for his flock, so our prayers for others will avail little, except we be daily making conscience of praying to God for ourselves; for saith Paul, "I make mention of you in my prayers:" he had his own ordinary prayers for himself, wherein he did remember them.

5. As to the occasion of his praying for them, see upon Col. i. 9, Doct. 1.

VER. 17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened—

The apostle, in the second place, giveth a short sum of his prayer unto God for them. And, first, he describeth God the Father, unto whom he prayeth, to be "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," to wit, as Christ is man, Psal. xxii. 10; as he is our Mediator, Psal. xl. 8; and with relation to that covenant of redemption betwixt God and Christ as mediator, Heb. ii. 13. And "the Father of glory;" so called, because he is in his own nature infinitely glorious, Psal. cxlv. 5, the fountain of the whole Godhead, and all the divine attributes in the Son, Psal. ii. 7, and Holy Ghost, John xiv. 26; for "glory" is sometimes taken for the Godhead and divine attributes, John ii. 11; and because he is the first cause of all that glory which is in any of the creatures, Psal. viii. 5. And lastly, he is the object of all glory, to whom all glory is due from the creatures, Psal. xix. 1. Secondly, he sheweth what he sought in prayer, even "wisdom," or a further increase of that wisdom and saving knowledge of divine mysteries whereof the Spirit of God is the author, mentioned ver. 8, together with a clearer insight in Scripture where those mysteries are revealed by the same Spirit. Which "wisdom" he sheweth doth mainly consist in the saving, believing, and operative "knowledge of him," that is, of Jesus Christ, ver. 17. And having more clearly expressed what he meaneth by this Spirit of wisdom, even the removing of the natural blindness of their understandings, and enduing them with a clear discerning in the things of God, ver. 17, he doth illustrate it further from those ends, for the attainment whereof he would have this wisdom bestowed, as shall be cleared afterwards. Hence learn, 1. The more painful and laborious that others, whether ministers, parents, friends, or neighbours, are for bringing about our salvation and spiritual good, we ought to be so much the more excited to painfulness and diligence about the same thing ourselves; else their pains will not only do us no good, but also much hurt, the Lord usually judicially plaguing the man whom every one would have doing well, only himself will not: for the apostle sheweth that he prayed,

and what he prayed for from God unto them; not to gain applause from them, (for that is condemned, Matt. vi. 5,) but that he might excite them unto prayer for themselves, and to endeavour after those things which he sought: "Making mention of you in my prayers, that God may give you," &c.

2. Though we are not of necessity to stint ourselves unto a set form of words in prayer, Rom. viii. 26, yet we would have set purposes condescended upon, and a certain scope to aim at in prayer, so as we may be able to give an account of what we pray for, whether in behalf of ourselves, or of others; otherwise we can neither expect nor observe the return of our prayers: for Paul setting down the sum of his prayer, sheweth he took notice of those things which he prayed for; even "that God may give unto you the spirit of wisdom," saith he.

3. Our prayers would be directed unto God only, and neither to glorified saints, who are ignorant of us, Isa. lxiii. 16, nor yet to the angels, who (though they be near unto us, 1 Cor. xi. 10, yet) know not the secrets of hearts, Jer. xvii. 10, and so are unfit to receive our prayers; beside that there is no warrant in Scripture for praying unto any such, but to God alone: hence the apostle directeth his prayer unto God, even "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto you," &c.

4. We ought to draw near to God, especially in the duties of prayer, whether for ourselves or others, with confidence and reverence, (the one not marring the other,) and in order hereto, we are so to conceive of God, and express such conceptions of ours concerning him, as may most strengthen our faith in the expectation of what we seek, and may strike our hearts with reverence towards God, from whom we seek: for those epithets which Paul giveth unto God, do tend to strengthen his faith, while he calleth him "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and to breed deep reverence in his own heart towards God, while he calleth him "the Father of glory," or "glorious Father."

5. That we may have access unto God with boldness through Christ in prayer, it is necessary to renew that act of faith whereby we apply and appropriate Christ unto ourselves, that so being made one with Christ, Eph. iii. 17, we may be looked upon by the Father, as clothed with his righteousness, Phil. iii. 9, whereby both our persons and imperfect prayers shall be accepted of by God through him, Heb. xi. 4; for Paul, whose practice here is a directory for prayer, doth appropriate Christ to himself as his own Christ: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ."

6. It is necessary also, in order to the same end, that in closing with Christ we do not part or divide him, but appropriate to ourselves the fulness of all those perfections which are in him; this being an evidence of the sincerity of our closing with him, and no less than whole Christ being necessary to cover all those imperfections, to bear us up under all those discouragements, to help us under all those infirmities which we are encompassed with in our approaches to God: for Paul doth appropriate Christ to himself under such titles as hold forth his complete fulness, to

wit, "of Lord," which implieth his power and sovereignty over all things for the believer's good, Phil. ii. 9—11. "Of Jesus," which signifieth a saviour, and pointeth forth his great work and errand to the world to save sinners, Matt. i. 21. And "of Christ," which signifieth anointed, and so pointeth at his threefold office unto which he was anointed and furnished in order to that work, Psa. xlv. 7, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ."

7. As "wisdom," or the saving knowledge of divine mysteries, is necessary unto a Christian: so, even those who are effectually called, and have a good measure of this grace already, ought not to sit down upon the measure received, but would constantly aspire after more of it, as being yet ignorant of many things, and not sufficiently rooted in the knowledge of those things which they already know, 1 Cor. xiii. 9; for while Paul prayeth for a greater measure of wisdom unto those Ephesians, towards whom God had already abounded in all wisdom, ver. 8, he doth indirectly excite them to endeavour to grow in this grace; "May give unto you the spirit of wisdom."

8. The wisdom and knowledge which Christians are to seek after, is not at all that carnal wisdom, which is enmity to God, James iii. 15, nor yet chiefly that natural wisdom, or knowledge of the hid mysteries of nature, Eccles. i. 17, 18, nor yet that wisdom or knowledge of divine mysteries, which is only a gift, and floweth from a common influence of the Spirit, 1 Cor. viii. 1, but that whereof the Spirit of God by his special operation and influence is author and worker, and is more than a gift, even the grace of wisdom, which is not acquired by our own industry and pains only, nor yet puffeth up, neither is it weak and coldrife, not warming the heart with love to the thing known, as the gift of wisdom is: but this grace of wisdom cometh from above, James iii. 17, by the use of other lawful means, Prov. ii. 1, &c., and must be sought from above, James i. 5. It humbleth the man who hath it, Job xlii. 3, 5, 6, it is operative upon the heart, and worketh love unto the thing known, John iv. 10, for the apostle prayeth, "That God would give them the spirit of wisdom," that is, whereof the Spirit of God is author by his spiritual grace.

9. Spiritual things, the object of this heavenly wisdom and knowledge, are not for the most part conclusions drawn from nature's light; but are revealed and made known by the Spirit of God, to wit, either in an extraordinary, immediate way, without the help of human means, unto the prophets and apostles, Eph. iii. 5, or, in an ordinary and mediate way, by the help of Scripture, and blessing of God upon the pains of public teachers, and such other means as he hath appointed for attaining to the mind of God revealed in Scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 15, &c.; for, jointly with the spirit of wisdom he seeketh "the spirit of revelation," implying, that this wisdom cannot be had without revelation.

10. The sum of all saving wisdom is to know Christ, and what Scripture speaketh of him as a complete mediator; and so to know him, as that we acknowledge him; which speaketh somewhat more than our simple knowing of him as our own, and with special application to ourselves, and so, as we give due honour, respect, and reve-

rence unto him: for though we are said to know even strangers and those whom we condemn and despise; yet we are not in strict phrase of speech said to acknowledge any but these of near relations, or whom we prosecute with that respect and honour which is due unto them, as the servant is said to acknowledge his master. Now Paul giveth this as the sum and compend of saving wisdom, while he saith, "In the knowledge of him," to wit, of Christ, or, "in the acknowledgment of him," as it is in the original.

11. It is not sufficient for attaining this grace of wisdom, or saving knowledge of divine truths, that those truths be plainly revealed by the Spirit of God in Scripture; there must be also a removal of that natural darkness and blindness which is in our understandings, whereby we may be enabled to take up that which is revealed, even as to the beholding of colours by the outward sense, there must not only be an outward light to make the object conspicuous, but also the faculty of seeing in the eye: a blind man cannot see at noon-day, nor yet the sharpest-sighted at midnight. Thus, for the taking up of things heavenly, the apostle prayeth both for a "spirit of revelation," to make those truths conspicuous, and for a new power of discerning in the understanding, that they might be able to take up the truth so revealed: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

12. The natural faculties of the soul are not destroyed in conversion, so as if from that time forward the renewed man did nothing, and the Spirit of God residing in him did all things: no, they are only renewed by the implanting of new gracious habits and dispositions in them, so that our wit, will, and affections being renewed, quickened, and wrought upon by the Spirit of God, do also themselves work, Phil. ii. 12, for Paul prayeth not that their understanding might be destroyed but enlightened: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

VER. 18. That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Here is one of those ends for attaining whereof the apostle would have this wisdom bestowed upon them, even that they might know those good things, which they were to partake of in heaven: which are first summarily propounded under the name of hope, taken here for the object of hope, or things hoped for, as Rom. viii. 24, Col. i. 5, and the "hope of their calling," because at their conversion they were called to the participation of those things; next, more fully explained, while they are called "an inheritance," which is most excellent, as being both "rich" and "glorious," and appertaineth only to the saints and those who are renewed by the Spirit of God; for the participle rendered "in" the saints, doth signify in, or amongst, and is so read Acts xxvi. 18.

DOCTRINES.

1. As effectual inward calling, whereby we are made a willing people in the day of God's

power, Psa. cx. 3, is only Christ's work by his Spirit upon the hearts of the elect, making them to give hearty obedience to the outward call by the mouth of his ministers; so by this work he openeth unto them a large door of hope, and calleth them, who were before without hope, to partake of an excellent and glorious inheritance, which is here called hope, or the thing hoped for, and the "hope of calling," they being called to the enjoyment of it, which calling is also called his, to wit, God's or Christ's, because it is his work; "What is the hope of his calling."

2. Though those who are effectually called do receive some part of that happiness, unto which they are called, presently, and in hand, to wit, those excellent benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and such others as do either accompany or flow from those in this life, 1 Cor. vi. 11, yet the great and chief part of it is not given then in present possession, but reserved in the heavens for them, 1 Pet. i. 4, so that they have it only in hope: for therefore is it called "the hope of their calling," a thing only hoped for.

3. Though those excellent things, which are not yet possessed, but only hoped for by believers, are known in part and in general, 1 John iii. 2, even so far as the knowledge which we have of them is sufficient to terminate our hope; (otherwise if they were wholly unknown, they could not be hoped for;) yet so excellent are those things in themselves, and therefore remote from our knowledge, and so much are we taken up with trifles and childish toys, that even true believers, and they who know most, and have their thoughts most exercised about them, are in a great part ignorant of them: they neither know them fully, nor particularly, Isa. lxiv. 4. So that heaven and glory will be found another kind of thing, than ever entered in the heart of man to think upon or look after, 1 Cor. ii. 9, for he prayeth that even the called Ephesians "might know what is the hope of his calling," implying that they were yet in a great part ignorant of it.

4. That measure of knowledge which may be attained here of those excellent things hoped for, should be carefully endeavoured and diligently sought after by believers, as being of great concernment to make them seek after these things being so known, Phil. iii. 14, to sweeten the bitterness of their cross, Rom. viii. 18, furnish them with matter for sweet meditation upon heaven and things heavenly, Phil. iii. 20, and to make them more vehemently long and desire after the actual possession of those things, Phil. i. 23, for Paul's praying for wisdom, that they "may know the hope of his calling," implieth that much more themselves ought to seek after the knowledge of it.

5. As those excellent things which are now hoped for, and really to be enjoyed in the other life, are of the nature of an inheritance, which is not purchased by us, but freely bestowed upon us; so they are properly Christ's inheritance, who hath proper right to it, as being the natural Son of God, and by virtue of his own purchase; but the right which we have is communicated to us through him in whom we have received the adop-

tion of children, and so are made heirs and co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17; for the apostle, explaining what those things hoped for are, calleth them an inheritance and his inheritance: "And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance."

6. This heavenly inheritance is a rich inheritance, as wanting nothing to make the state of those who enjoy it completely happy, and giving full satisfaction and contentment, Psal. xvii. 15, and therefore it is called "the riches of his inheritance," that is, after the manner of speech much used among the Hebrews: "A rich inheritance."

7. It is also a glorious inheritance, there being nothing there but what is glorious: the sight shall be glorious; for we shall see God as we are seen, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, the place shall be glorious, 2 Cor. xii. 4, the company glorious, all the glorified saints and angels, Heb. xii. 22, 23, our souls and bodies shall be glorious, Phil. iii. 21, and our daily exercise shall be glorious, even to give glory unto God for ever and ever, Rev. vii. 9, 10, for therefore it is called "the glory of his inheritance," or "his glorious inheritance."

8. Though sanctification and holiness do not merit this heavenly inheritance, seeing it cometh to us freely, and as it were by lot, (as the word signifieth;) yet none have present right to it, nor yet shall have possession of it afterwards, but only the saints, even they who are renewed and inherently holy: without holiness none shall see God, Heb. xii. 14, for he saith, "It is an inheritance in the saints," that is, whereof only saints are possessors.

9. That we know and acknowledge Christ aright, it is necessary to perpend much, and thereby endeavour to know how useful a person he has been and is unto us, what great rich and glorious things he hath purchased for us, and doth preserve in heaven for our behoof: for he mentioneth their knowing the hope of his calling, as one end or part of that wisdom which consisteth in the knowing or acknowledgment of him, spoken of ver. 17: "That ye may know the hope of his calling," &c.

VER. 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Here is another of those ends, for attaining whereof the apostle would have this wisdom bestowed upon them, even that they might know somewhat of that which they partake, at least in this life, to wit, the greatness of God's power, which he exerciseth in and towards believers, in his bestowing upon them saving grace, and carrying on of that work, in despite of men and devils, from step to step, until grace shall be crowned in glory, and they actually installed in the possession of that rich and glorious inheritance: and he representeth and describeth this power, first, from its greatness; it is great, and so great, that sufficient words cannot be found to express the greatness of it, it is superlative and hyperbolically great; for so the word in the original signifieth. Secondly, from the object towards whom this power is exercised, to wit, believers. And, thirdly, from the principle and fountain from

whence this powerful working floweth, even God's own natural and infinite power: which he describeth from two epithets, it is mighty; yea, almighty, so as nothing is too hard for it, Gen. xviii. 14, and it is a working power, or efficacious in working, and so as it cannot be resisted, where it is employed to work, Isa. xxvii. 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. So unworthy is any of the lost sons of Adam of this heavenly inheritance, Eph. ii. 3, so great and insuperable are these difficulties which are in their way to it, Eph. vi. 12, and so weak and impotent are they to get them overcome, 2 Cor. iii. 5, that no less than the omnipotent power of God working omnipotently is required to make them meet for it, and bring them to the actual possession of it; and therefore only the consideration of this mighty power can answer those doubts wherewith sense of weakness and unworthiness will furnish a man against the possibility of his ever attaining to it: for what is here spoken of God's power, seemeth to be subjoined, thereby to point forth the way, how that rich inheritance is attained, and to solve those doubts which they might have had against their coming to it: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power."

2. They, and they only, shall come to possess this heavenly inheritance after time, who partake of the working of his mighty power upon their hearts in time: for having spoken of that rich and glorious inheritance, he speaketh here of the "exceeding greatness of his power towards those who believe," whereby he sheweth not only how we come to that inheritance, but also who those are who shall come to it.

3. The power which God exercises in converting and carrying on the work of grace to glory in the elect, is not only great, but exceedeth all contrary power which might impede that work; so that there is no power in the devil, the world, in sin, nor death, which this power doth not overcome, yea, nor any impotency in the elect themselves, which this greatness of power will not help and strengthen: for he calleth it "the exceeding greatness of his power."

4. There cannot a more pregnant proof be given of God's omnipotent power in working, than what he giveth in converting sinners from sin to holiness, and carrying on the work of grace in them against all opposition, until they come to heaven: the creation of the world, and working of miracles, is no more evident proof of his omnipotency in working than this is: for he instanteth the exceeding greatness of his mighty power, not in any of those things, but in his working towards believers; "Towards us who believe," saith he.

5. So averse are men by nature from believing in Jesus Christ for righteousness, so great an enemy is Satan to the grace of faith above all other graces, Luke xxii. 31, 32, that no less than the working of God's exceeding great and mighty power is required for working us up to the grace of faith, and the exercise of it: for his designing them by the name of "believers," while he speaketh of the exceeding greatness of his power, implieth so much: "Towards us who believe."

6. Those only are most fit to speak of God's powerful and gracious working in hearts, who have found somewhat of that work in themselves; such will speak both more confidently and more thoroughly of this work, there being somewhat of God's work in hearts, which cannot be so fully attained by mere reading or hearing, except experience serve as a commentary to understand what is read and heard, *Psa. xxxiv. 8*; for therefore, saith he, not "towards those" who believe, but "us who believe," including himself, to show he spoke of this power, not as a stranger to it, but from experience, that they might believe him the rather.

7. This mighty power of God in its working towards believers, is extended unto all times, without restriction unto any difference of time, either by past, present, or to come. It hath wrought in their first conversion, and bringing them to believing, *John vi. 44*, it doth work by preserving them in the state of grace, *Luke xxii. 32*, by actuating their graces in them, *Phil. ii. 13*, and making them to grow, *Cant. iv. 16*, and shall continue with them always working until their graces be perfected, and they completely glorified, *Phil. i. 6*; for he expresseth no difference of time wherein it worketh, only that it doth work; "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."

8. God's omnipotent and efficacious power, which belongeth unto him naturally and essentially as he is God, is not only the fountain and principle from whence his powerful operation towards believers doth flow, but also the rule according to which he doth work; so that he is not only omnipotent, who worketh, but also he worketh omnipotently, and therefore irresistibly; for, saith he, "The greatness of his power to us-ward who believe," is "according to the working of his mighty power."

9. Even those who are believers, in whom this mighty power hath already wrought, may be in a great measure ignorant of the exceeding greatness of it; they are destitute even of the notional knowledge of it in a great part, because of the mysteriousness of the subject, *John iii. 8*, and their little acquaintance with the word, which revealeth the way of God's working in souls, *Psa. lxxvii. and lxxviii.*, but chiefly of experimental knowledge; there being much to be wrought in them by his mighty power, whereof they can have no experience as yet, *Phil. iii. 21*, there being much also already wrought in them, and they know it not, but doubt of it, *John ix. 11*; for though it be a mighty working power, yet it hath a meek, sweet, *Psa. cx. 3*, secret, *Cant. v. 4*, and therefore a not easy discernible work; thus those believing Ephesians were in a great part ignorant of this power, else to what purpose did the apostle pray that "they might know what is the exceeding greatness of his power?"

10. The experimental knowledge chiefly of God's way of working in and towards believers, is to be carefully sought after, as being of great concernment to make us thankful to God for his gracious working in us where it is known and felt, *Psa. cxvi. 8, 9, &c.*, as also in order to our own comfort arising from that our knowledge,

Psa. cxvi. 7, and to strengthen our faith and hope in God, *Rom. v. 4*; for while Paul prayeth for the knowledge of this mighty working power to them, he teacheth them to seek after this knowledge themselves; "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power."

11. This experimental knowledge of God's power, is an eminent part of spiritual wisdom, and of our knowing and acknowledging of Christ aright; for he prayeth that "they may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power," as one end or part of that spiritual wisdom which consisteth in the knowledge or acknowledgment of him, spoken of *ver. 17*.

VER. 20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

The apostle, in the third branch of this second part of the chapter, taking occasion from what he spoke of the exceeding greatness of God's power in believers, *ver. 19*, falleth out upon a commendation, and more large explication of that mighty power, taken from one of its admirable effects towards Christ, in exalting him from his low condition, whereby he doth yet prosecute his main scope; for what greater confirmation could be given unto their faith in Christ, than the making known unto them how highly exalted Christ is, and that the same divine power which exalted him, had wrought, was working, and would continue to work in them, until all those glorious things which they had now only in hope, should be actually bestowed upon them? And, first, that he may commend and clear that mighty power, according to which God did work in the believing Ephesians, he doth briefly propound two things, which were wrought by it towards the exaltation of Christ; first, his resurrection from the dead; secondly, his being set at the right hand of God in heavenly places, whereby is set forth that high glory and dignity, which, after Christ's resurrection and ascension, was put upon Christ, as God-man, far surpassing the glory of all things created, *Phil. ii. 9*, together with that high power and authority which the same Christ, God-man, hath obtained over all things, to dispose of them for the church's good, *1 Pet. iii. 22*, which glory and authority of Christ is only visible in the heavens, and therefore it is said to be "in heavenly places;" because Christ's human nature, through which his Deity doth shine and manifest itself, is only in heaven, *Acts iii. 21*, although the effects of this, his power and authority, may be and are perceived elsewhere, *Acts ii. 33*. And that this is intended to be held forth by Christ's sitting at the Father's right hand, is clear, not only from the places presently cited, and the apostle's own explication, which he subjoineth in the verses following, but also from the phrase itself, which cannot be proper, seeing God hath neither right nor left hand properly, *John iv. 24*, and so must be a metaphor borrowed from kings and princes, who do set those at their right hand whom they highly honour, *1 Kings ii. 19*, or place in any office of chief authority and trust, *Matt. xx. 21*.

DOCTRINES.

1. As our Lord Jesus was once among the dead, so he did rise again from death, (see upon Gal. i. ver. 1, Doct. 7 ;) for, saith he, "When he raised him from the dead."

2. The raising of Christ from the dead, as it was the Father's work, so, considering what an eminent person Christ was, and how low he was brought, Phil. ii. 6—8, and what a height of honour he was exalted unto, Phil. ii. 9, 10, and that he did sustain our person in dying, (the iniquities of us all being laid upon him, Isa. liii. 6,) and in rising again from death, Eph. ii. 5, 6. All those, I say, being considered, this work of raising Christ was an effect of God's extraordinary and mighty power; for, as he ascribeth the raising of Christ to the Father, which doth not contradict those scriptures which affirm Christ to have risen by his own power, John ii. 19, and x. 17, because it is one and the same power which is in both Father and Son, they being one only God, 1 John v. 7, so he doth ascribe it to the working of his mighty power, spoken of ver. 19, and related unto in this, while he saith, "Which," or "according to which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead."

3. The self-same omnipotent power, which wrought in and towards Christ's exaltation in all the steps of it, is engaged for working grace, and carrying on the work of grace in believers, and for performing unto believers whatever they have ground to hope for from his word; and therefore we may look upon the several effects and proofs of this power towards Christ, as so many pledges that God will, against all opposition, perform whatever he hath undertaken to us; for he maketh that power, whereby he worketh in believers, and whereby he raised Christ from the dead, to flow from one and the same fountain and principle in God, and the one to be according to the other, while he saith, "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ."

4. This high honour and sovereign power, signified by sitting at the Father's right hand, was put upon Christ, not before, but after his humiliation and resurrection from the dead; for then in his human nature he did receive dominion and honour, which he never had until then, as man; and, though being considered as God, clothed only with his own divine majesty, he was from all eternity equal in power and glory with the Father and Holy Ghost, Phil. ii. 6, yet he did not reign as God incarnate, and clothed with our flesh, until then, having had this divine glory, so that very little of it did appear under the infirmities of the human nature from his incarnation until then, Phil. ii. 7, 8, but then he did manifest his divine glory, absolute power and authority, in a way incomprehensible by us, in and through the veil of his glorified flesh: for the apostle sheweth those things were done in this order, while he saith, "When he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand."

5. Although the divine and human nature in Christ are not confounded, but remain distinct

both in their essence and operations, each nature doing that which is proper unto itself, Heb. ix. 14, 1 Pet. iii. 18, yet, so near and strict is that personal union of the two natures in Christ, that those things which are proper only unto the one nature, are ascribed unto and spoken of the whole person: for here, though this high honour and trust put upon Christ was in some things verified only in the divine nature, in so far as it speaketh his manifestation of his divine glory and exercising his divine authority, as God incarnate, in and through the human nature: and though in some things it was verified only in the human nature, in so far as it speaketh his obtaining of glory and power from the Father, which before he had not; yet, the whole of it is ascribed unto the whole person of Christ, God-man, while he saith, "And made him to sit at his own right hand."

6. Though Christ, as Mediator, be exalted to such high honour and authority, as no mere creature is capable of; yet, so far is his human nature from being made hereby omnipotent, omnipresent, and consequently equal with God, that even whole Christ, considered as Mediator, is inferior and less than the Father, John xiv. 28, as having received all this honour and authority from the Father, Matt. xxviii. 18, and administering his kingdom in the Father's name, John v. 22, which he is also to render up unto the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, for not only do the Scriptures cited, but also the phrase here used, prove so much, seeing those whom the king setteth at his right hand do hold their dignity and trust from him, and must be comtable unto him; "And set him at his own right hand."

VER. 21. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22. And hath put all things under his feet,

The apostle, in the second place, insisteth upon that second effect of God's mighty power, and explaineth what he meant by the Father's setting of Christ at his own right hand, even that which we formerly showed, to wit, that transcendent glory and dignity, with full power and sovereignty which was put upon him; and first, he speaketh of that general power and eminency which he hath over and above all the creatures, by showing that he is exalted in glory, not only above, but far above the glory of all creatures whatsoever, whether "principality, power, might, or dominion," under which is comprehended every thing that is excellent among the creatures, whether in heaven, earth, or hell; for sometimes good angels are expressed by those titles, Eph. iii. 10, sometimes bad angels, Eph. vi. 12, and sometimes civil powers, Tit. iii. 1, and lest any might apprehend some dignity besides, not comprehended under any of these four, he addeth a general clause, comprising "every name," that is, all things excellent or famous, and worthy to be so named; as famous men are called men of name; so that he hereby sheweth

no creature can enter in competition with Christ in glory, dignity, and worth: and withal he extendeth this glory put upon Christ in its duration, not only unto this world, but that which is to come, and shall never have an end, ver. 21, and that he may exalt Christ yet further, he sheweth, that he is not only above all creatures in glory, but also in dominion and sovereignty, the Father having placed all the creatures in a state of lowest subjection unto him, even "under his feet," to be disposed of as he seeth fit.

From ver. 21, learn, 1. The glory and splendour of things created hath some aptness in it, if it be not rightly looked on, or rather we are apt to take occasion from it to hide and undervalue the glory and excellency of Jesus Christ; for otherwise the apostle would not labour so much to set him high up above them, and his glory above theirs; "Far above all principality and power."

2. Though Scripture give some ground to affirm that there are different degrees and dignities among the angels, Dan. x. 13, and xii. 1, yet, what are their different orders, offices, and dignities, Scripture doth nowhere determine: neither is there any ground for us to determine from this place: for as we show, the apostle's scope is under those titles, and the general clause subjoined, to lay aside, not only angels, but all civil powers, and all created dignity whatsoever from competing with Christ in the point of power, excellency, and worth; "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."

3. Even the human nature of Christ, and his glorified body by virtue of that unspeakable union which is betwixt the two natures of Christ in one person, is lifted up so high in glory, that the glory of kings and emperors, of sun, moon, and stars, of the souls of just men made perfect; yea, and of glorious angels, is nothing to it, and less than the light of a candle being compared with the sun in his brightness: for he is speaking here of that glory which Christ hath by sitting at the right hand of God, which, as to some pieces of it, doth belong to Christ, as man; and of it he affirmeth, that it is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."

4. As we do then only think aright of that high glory put upon Christ, when we look on it as matchless, and not only above, but far, and infinitely far above all that glory which can be found in all, or any of the creatures; so the holding forth of Christ in his glory by the Lord's servants, is a point of great concernment for the good of God's people, to make all created glory wax dim and bulkless, Dan. iii. 16—18, to draw their hearts up after and towards him, John iv. 10, to hearten them against those discouragements they usually meet with in doing service to him, Acts vii. 55, 56, and to make them more reverent in their approaches to him, Heb. xii. 25, for therefore doth Paul so much labour as he cannot well satisfy himself, in setting forth that high glory wherein Christ is, while he saith, "He is above, and far above;" and then enumerateth four comprehensive particulars, and addeth a general clause comprising all things, and prefer-

reth Christ unto all; "Far above all principality and power," &c.

5. As there is a world to come, when this is gone, wherein shall dwell righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 13, so though Christ's kingdom shall cease at the last day, and be delivered up by him to the Father, as to the way wherein he doth now administer it by ruling in the midst of his enemies, Psal. cx. 2, whom he subdueth and destroyeth, Psal. ii. 9, and gathering in his elect by the means of word and sacraments, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, yet this kingdom of his shall never cease, but be continued in that world which is to come without end, as to the glory, majesty, absolute sovereignty and dominion over all the creatures, which Jesus Christ, Mediator, and God manifested in the flesh, shall enjoy for ever and ever: for these words, "Not only in this world, but in the world to come," do show the duration of Christ's kingly glory, and are to be referred not to the word named, immediately preceding, but to God's action of setting Christ at his right hand, far above all principality, "not only in this world," &c.

From ver. 22, learn, 1. The Lord hath all things at his disposal, to do with them what he pleaseth: for, saith Paul, "He hath put all things under his feet," which he could not have done, except they had been at his disposal.

2. Jesus Christ, God-man, Mediator, is not only exalted unto high glory, and dignity above all the creatures; but also hath received absolute dominion and sovereign authority over them all, so that all the creatures, even the greatest, are subjected to him, and that in the lowest degree of subjection, to wit, some willingly, as the effectually called and chosen, Psal. cx. 3, others by constraint, and without or contrary to any purpose or intention of their own, being liable unto and made use of by his over-ruling power for bringing about his own glory and his church's good, Rom. viii. 28; thus devils, reprobates, crosses, temptations, and all creatures are subjected to him: for it seemeth those "all things," which are under Christ's feet, must be taken universally of all creatures whatsoever, as being most agreeable not only to the verse preceding, where the comparison is made betwixt Christ and all creatures, but also to Phil. ii. 10, 11, which place is a commentary unto this, "He hath put all things under his feet."

VER. 22. And gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The apostle, having spoken of Christ's glory and sovereignty in general over all the creatures, doth next hold forth his special dominion and sovereignty over the church, by showing, that Christ, "over or above all," that is, in a special manner, is given by the Father to be the church's head; which is a metaphor taken from the natural body, to which he compareth Christ and his church. And, first, he sheweth that Christ doth answer to the head: which implieth an eminency in him above the church, his body, Cant. v. 10,

together with authority and power over his church to rule and govern her, both visibly by his own officers, dispensing the word and censures, 1 Cor. v. 4, and inwardly, by the powerful operation of his Spirit, John xvi. 13, 14; it implieth also oneness of nature betwixt him and his church, Heb. ii. 14; and fulness of perfection, enabling him to do all the duties of a head to such a great, necessitous, and infirm body, as his church is, Col. ii. 3; and it implieth a strict union betwixt him and his church, as is betwixt the head and members in the natural body: the tie of which union, as to the church visible (which is his visible, political, and ministerial body, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17,) is the bond of the covenant of grace, wherein they are externally, Psal. l. 5, together with a profession of faith in Christ, Acts viii. 37; but as to the invisible church of real believers, they are, as to the inward man, animated and enlivened with that same Spirit, which was poured forth on Christ, Rom. viii. 9; they have also faith in him, and love to him, wrought by his Spirit in them, Col. i. 4, Eph. vi. 24; and hereby they are united most strictly to him. And, lastly, the metaphor implieth communication of influence from Christ to the church, to wit, an influence of common gifts from his Spirit to the visible church, Eph. iv. 7, &c., and an influence of spiritual life, motion, and of saving grace to the invisible church of believers, Col. ii. 19, even as the head is above, and ruleth the body, is of the same nature with the body, hath all the inward and outward senses with memory and understanding seated in it for guiding the body, is united to the body, and conveyeth influence for motion and sense unto the body. And, secondly, ver. 23, he sheweth that the church answereth to the rest of the body under the head, and is called Christ's body, to wit, not his natural, but mystical body: which implieth not only the church's union with Christ, but union and order also among the members themselves, together with diversity of gifts and functions, as there are several members in the natural body, 1 Cor. xii.; it implieth also their receiving influence for life and motion from Christ, Eph. iv. 16, and the duty of subjection and obedience due unto him as head, Eph. v. 24. He sheweth also the high honour which is put upon the church by being Christ's body, even, that hereby they become Christ's fulness, not as if believers did add any personal perfection to him, who is infinite in perfections, unto whom nothing can be added; only, they are members of that mystical body, unto which he of grace hath undertaken the relation of head, so that the church is the fulness, not of personal, but of mystical Christ, as both head and members of that mystical body are comprehended under that name Christ, (see 1 Cor. xii. 12,) and therefore, lest any should think that this expression did imply any want of perfection in Christ to be supplied by the church, the apostle sheweth that Christ, as God-man, Mediator, filleth the all of his body the church, (for the purpose in hand requireth this all to be so straitened,) upon whom he bestoweth a fulness, partly of gifts, and partly of graces, a fulness answerable to the present state of childhood and imperfection, wherein we live here on earth; as

the Romans are said to be full of goodness and knowledge, Rom. xv. 14; so that Christ is so far from borrowing any perfection from his church, that all her perfections are but drops falling from that ocean and fulness of grace which is in him, John i. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Jesus Christ is the Father's gift unto the church; a gift which is offered unto all within the church, John iii. 16, though not received by all, John i. 11, but by real believers, who, by receiving him, obtain a right unto him, John iii. 36, with 1 John v. 11, 12, and to all those excellent saving privileges which were purchased by him, John i. 12, so, whosoever would receive this gift aright, must receive him as their head, to quicken them, to rule them, and to be revered by them: for, "He gave him to be head to the church."

2. The power and superiority which Christ hath over his church, chiefly the invisible church of real believers, as head, is of another kind than that which he hath over all other creatures besides, as being more intimate, amiable, and in a manner more native and natural, and accompanied with willing subjection in his church, Psal. ex. 3, even as the superiority which the king's head hath over his own body, or his royal consort, being compared with that which he hath over his subjects, or rather his subdued enemies: for, "He gave him to be head over all to the church:" over all, that is, in a singular and eminent manner above the domination which he hath over all other creatures.

3. None in any sense can be a head to the church, unto whom the church in that same sense is not a body; so that if the church be not the pope's body, the pope cannot be the church's head: for there is a reciprocity betwixt the head and body in this purpose, as Christ is the church's head, so the church is his body; "He gave him to be head to the church, which is his body."

4. None can draw comfort from those sweet relations of head, husband, king, &c., which Christ hath taken upon him towards his church, but they who stand under a correspondent relation towards him, as being his body, spouse, and subjects, and who make conscience of such duties as each of these relations do bind unto: for as Christ is a head to the church, so the church is his body; "Which is his body," saith he.

5. As Christ, by taking upon himself those relations towards his church which are found amongst men, doth stand obliged unto those duties which men are bound to by virtue of such relations, Psal. xxiii. 1, &c.; so the Lord's people are allowed and commanded to search unto the duties and privileges following upon such relations among men, and from thence to learn what to expect from Christ by virtue of that relation, and what honour and privileges they do enjoy by standing under that relation to Christ: for from this, that Christ and the church stand under the relation of head and body, the apostle inferreth that the church hath this privilege of being Christ's fulness, even, as the shoulders, arms, breast, belly, legs, and thighs, are the ful-

ness of the natural body, so that mystical Christ, made up of head and members, is not complete and fall without the church, or the least believer in the church; "Which is his body, the fulness of him," saith he.

6. In searching forth the grounds of these similitudes or relations, taken from amongst men, whereby Christ setteth forth to our capacity what he himself is to his people, we would carefully guard lest, by pressing them too far, we ascribe any thing to Christ which is not according to the analogy of faith, or in any measure dishonourable to him: for Paul having stretched forth that similitude of the head and body so far as to infer thence that the church is the fulness of mystical Christ, he carefully guardeth against a mistake, whereby people might think that thou some perfection were wanting in Christ to be supplied by his church, while he saith, that "Christ filleth all in all."

7. As even believers in themselves are empty creatures till they be filled, being destitute of all good which they may call their own, Rom. vii. 18, and unable to help themselves, if it were but with one right thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5; so there is a supply to the full of all their emptiness in Christ, who is made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30; and communicateth largely and to the full of his own fulness, unto such as are sensible of their own emptiness, John i. 16, Psal. lxxxi. 10; for, "He filleth all in all."

8. Before that Christ do thus supply our emptiness out of his own fulness, he must first be in us, and united to us by faith, Eph. iii. 17; for he is in all whom he filleth; "He filleth all in all."

CHAPTER II.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle doth commend the doctrine of salvation by free grace, first, from the consideration of that misery under which not only the Ephesians and other Gentiles were before conversion, as being spiritually dead, ver. 1, following the corrupt custom of the world, and Satan's suggestions, ver. 2, but even the Jews also, as being enslaved to their own corrupt lusts, ver. 3. Secondly, from the consideration of that delivery from sin and misery, which was common to them both. And, first, he mentioneth the first fountain and internal impulsive cause of that delivery, to wit, God's free grace, ver. 4. Secondly, the several branches of it, as their quickening in the way of grace, ver. 5, the resurrection of their bodies, and their glorification in heaven, ver. 6. Thirdly, the final cause of this delivery, to wit, the manifesting of God's rich grace, ver. 7. And, fourthly, he cleareth, and proveth they were saved only by grace, by removing all other things inconsistent with grace from having influence upon our salvation: and that first, generally, ver. 8, and then particularly, their good works: because, first, otherwise they should have had

matter of gloriation in themselves, as to this purpose, the contrary whereof is intended by God, ver. 9. Secondly, power to do good works was given them in regeneration; so that though they be necessary, yet they are not meritorious, ver. 10.

In the second part of the chapter, he maketh a more particular application of the former purpose unto the Ephesians, and in them to all the Gentiles. And, first, he layeth forth that misery, which was in a great part peculiar unto them, as they were Gentiles; and this both more generally, ver. 11, and more particularly in five several branches, ver. 12. Secondly, he declareth their present happy estate of nearness to God and his church through Christ, briefly, ver. 13, and explaineth more fully that Christ was the peacemaker, and in order to his making peace had abolished the ceremonial law, ver. 14, 15; and sheweth a twofold necessity of Christ's so doing, both for uniting of Jew and Gentile in one church, ver. 15, and for reconciling both of them to God, ver. 16. Thirdly, he sheweth that this benefit of nearness was published, and actually communicated unto them by the preaching of the gospel, ver. 17, which he proveth from the access which both Jew and Gentile had to God, ver. 18. And lastly, he concludeth from what is said, that the Ephesians were now in a blessed state, comparing the whole church to a city, a family, ver. 19, and to a stately edifice founded upon Christ, ver. 20, 21; and showing they were a part of this building, ver. 22.

VER. 1. And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

The apostle (being yet further to establish those Ephesians in the doctrine of salvation by free grace in Christ, and for this end, to set forth the happiness of that estate in which free grace had placed them) sheweth the misery of their former estate before conversion, even that they were dead, not naturally, but spiritually; there being nothing of that spiritual life in them which consisteth in the union of the soul with God, John v. 40, and in a virtue and power of the soul, flowing from this union, to do those things which are spiritually good, and acceptable unto God, John xv. 5; even as the natural life consisteth in the union of the soul with the body, whereby the man is enabled to move, speak, and do such other actions as are competent to that life, so that their spiritual deadness doth speak a separation from God, Psal. lviii. 3, and total inability to do any thing which is spiritually good, Rom. viii. 7. The efficient and formal cause of which death he sheweth to have been their sins and trespasses: whereby under two words used indifferently in Scripture to express one and the same thing, and both of them in the plural number, is set forth the multitude of sins under which they lay in their dead condition, as their original sin, their actual sins, sins of omission, commission, and especially their manifold idolatries, which are chiefly pointed at, as those sins wherein not only the Ephesians, but the world in general, did wallow before Christ came in the flesh, Acts xvii. 29, 30.

Hence learn, 1. It is not sufficient that the servants of Jesus Christ do only preach privileges, and hold forth unto believers that happy estate unto which they are lifted up through Christ; it is necessary also that jointly herewith they be calling them to mind their woful, miserable, and lost estate by nature; that, the one being set forth against the other, both may more clearly appear in their own colours, and that those dangerous rocks of growing vain because of what they now are, 2 Cor. xii. 7, and of turning discouraged and diffident because of what they once were, Psa. xxv. 7, may be eschewed: for the apostle, in the preceding chapter, having spoken much of those high privileges unto which the Ephesians were advanced by Christ, he doth here mind them of that miserable state wherein God found them; "And you who were dead in trespasses and sins."

2. There is nothing contributeth more to commend the doctrine of free grace to peoples' consciences, and so to commend it as to make them closely adhere unto it, both in possession and practice, than the serious perpending of man's woful and altogether hopeless estate by nature: this alone would do much to scatter all that mist whereby human reason doth obscure the beauty of this truth, by extolling man's free will as a co-worker with grace, Rom. iii. 19, 20, and would necessitate the lost sinner to embrace it, and to venture his otherwise hopeless salvation upon it, 1 Tim. i. 15; for this is the apostle's scope through this whole chapter, even from the consideration of the woful estate of those Ephesians before conversion, to illustrate this doctrine of salvation by free grace, and to confirm them in it; "And you who were dead in trespasses and sins."

3. Believers in Jesus Christ are not to look upon their lost and miserable estate by nature separately, and apart from, but jointly with God's free grace and mercy, which hath delivered them from that misery; for otherwise the thoughts of sin and misery may, if God should give way, swallow them up, Matt. xxvii. 4, 5. Hence is it the apostle hath so contrived his discourse here, that all along, while he speaketh of their misery in the first three verses, the mind of the reader is kept in suspense without coming to the perfect close of a sentence, until God's mercy in their delivery from this misery be mentioned, ver. 5; for the original hath not these words, "he hath quickened," in this verse: but the translators have taken them from ver. 5, to make up the sense, without suspending the reader so long until he should find them in their own proper place; "And you who were dead," &c.

4. Every man by nature, and before conversion, is dead, not to sin, (for that is proper to the regenerate only; see Rom. vi. 2, where the grammatical construction is the same in the original with that which is here; only the sense is much different,) but in sin, whereby he is wholly deprived of all ability and power to convert himself, Rom. ix. 16, or to do any thing which is spiritually good, Rom. viii. 7; for while he saith the Ephesians were dead in sins before God did quicken them, he speaketh of a thing common to them with others, and therefore he

reckoneth himself and the other believing Jews with them, ver. 3, "And you who were dead in sins."

5. As the fountain-cause of this spiritual death was Adam's sin, in whom all have sinned, Rom. v. 12, through the merit of whose sin imputed to us, we are deprived of original righteousness, Rom. vii. 18, and a perverse inclination unto all evil hath come in its place, Gen. vi. 5; so every man's own particular actual sins do lay him lower under this state of death, and make his delivery from it more difficult, Jer. xiii. 23; for saith he, "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins;" under which are comprehended, as we show, both their original and actual sins.

VER. 2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

He proveth they were thus dead in sins and trespasses from their walking in and making a daily trade of sin, without striving against it, or any thorough remorse for it: which woful walk of theirs he doth illustrate from two guides, which they followed, and by which they were carried on and encouraged in their sinful course. The first was, the universal corrupt course and custom of the world (that is, of wicked men in the world, Psa. xvii. 14,) in all ages, which had become a law for them to walk by; the second guide was Satan, who is here called a prince; not only because there being a number of those unclean spirits, they are joined as one politic body among themselves under one, who is as prince and head of the rest, Matt. xii. 24, and xxv. 41; but also and mainly, because of that power which all the devils, and chiefly their head and prince, have over wicked men in the world, John xiv. 30, 2 Cor. iv. 4; even over the children of disobedience; which princely power of his is described from the place where, by God's permission, he doth exercise it; to wit, the region of the air; he doth exercise it also in the earth, and hell, 1 Pet. v. 8, and therefore these must not be here excluded, but rather included, as being below the region of the air. It is described also from the subjects of his kingdom; to wit, those who are not only so obstinate in evil, that they cannot be persuaded by any means to relinquish it, (as the word in the original, rendered disobedience, implieth,) but also are judicially given over to disobedience, and fully under the power of it, which is expressed, while they are called children of disobedience, according to the custom of the holy language, whereby those who are fully given over, and under the power of any vice, are said to be the children of that vice, Hos. ii. 4, concerning which obstinate sinners the apostle affirmeth that the spirit of Satan did incessantly and without intermission work most powerfully in them, by driving them unto all manner of evil without any stay or hinderance. See John viii. 41, 44.

DOCTRINES.

1. The depth of man's natural misery is so great, that even the renewed children of God cannot reach it at one view, nor be sufficiently convinced of it, until the word of the Lord do frequently inculcate and lay it forth in its woful parcels, yea, and bear in upon them the truth of it by most convincing reasons, taken from their own sense and experience: for the apostle, speaking to the converted Ephesians, seeth a necessity not only to declare in the general that they had been dead in sins and trespasses, but also to prove it was so, and to point forth that woful death at large in this verse; "Wherein in time past ye walked," &c.

2. Though even the regenerate have a body of sin and death dwelling in them, Rom. vii. 24, and do sometimes actually fall in sin, yea, even very gross sins, 2 Sam. xi. 4, and xii. 9, yet they do not walk in sin, that is, sin is not to the child of God as the way to the traveller, so as to make it his daily trade and employment, Psal. i. 1, or to sin without any reluctancy flowing from a spiritual principle against that which he knoweth to be sin, Gal. v. 17; and so as to walk after sin, by making sin, and suggestions to sin, his guide, whom he doth willingly follow, Rom. viii. 1, although sin may conquer, and carry him as an unwilling captive, Rom. vii. 14, &c.; for Paul maketh their walking in sin an argument to prove that they were dead in sin, and therefore it cannot fall upon the regenerate; "Wherein in time past ye walked."

3. Such is the power of converting grace, that it causes men to change their former way and course, though they have been never so much rooted in it, and habituated to it: for while he saith, "Wherein in time past ye walked," he implieth there was a change wrought, and that they did not so walk in the time present.

4. While Scripture affirmeth that Christ hath taken away the sins of the world, John i. 29, and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 2, it is no cogent argument to prove that Christ hath died for all and every one in the world; seeing the word "world" doth not always when mentioned in Scripture comprise all who are in the world, but must be restricted to the universality of some certain kind of people in the world, as the nature of the purpose in hand will bear: for here the "world," whose course the unconverted Ephesians did follow, must be the world of unrenewed men only, and cannot be extended so as to comprehend the godly and renewed, who were also in the world: "Ye walked according to the course of this world."

5. The Lord is so far from being moved with the merit or worth of those whom he doth convert, to bestow converting grace upon them rather than on others whom he leaveth in their unconverted state, that he maketh this grace of his to fall upon such as are in no respect better than those whom he passeth by: for those Ephesians before conversion "walked according to the course of this world," that is, they were behind with none in sin and wickedness.

6. As the general corrupt custom and example of those with whom we live, or who have lived

in the former ages of the world before us, is a strong incitement, and sufficient excuse in the minds of many, to follow the multitude in doing evil, without further inquiry; so it argueth a man to be yet in an unrenewed estate, when he maketh the example of others the highest rule according to which he walketh, and laboureth to conform himself unto it more than to the will of God: for the apostle sheweth the general custom and course of the world was the rule by which they walked, and an encouragement to them in their walk, and maketh this an argument to prove they were then dead in sins and trespasses; "Wherein, (saith he) in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world."

7. All men in their unrenewed state are very slaves to Satan, whose woful motions and suggestions they follow, and whom they resemble and imitate in their sin and wickedness; for so much is implied while he saith, "They walked according to the prince of the power of the air," that is, the devil.

8. Though the devil and fallen angels have always a hell, horror, and torment in their conscience wherever they are, 2 Pet. ii. 4, yet they are not always in hell, that place of torment which is prepared for devils and reprobates, Matt. xxv. 41; they are also present in the earth and air, and there through divine permission have no small power, even so great as they are able to move the elements, bring down fire upon earth, Job i. 16, raise storms, Job i. 19, to smite men's bodies with several diseases, Job ii. 7, yea, and to take away the lives of men, Job i. 19, and beasts, Mark v. 13; which power of theirs in its exercise is always overruled and limited by God, Job i. 12, and ii. 6; in so far as his most holy and overruling providence doth thereby bring about his own design and purpose, which is either to execute deserved judgment upon the wicked, Mark v. 13, 17, or to exercise and try the godly, Job i. 12, &c.; for Satan is called "prince of the power of the air," that is, who hath power in the air.

9. As the devils are of a spiritual nature and substance, and cannot be seen by bodily eyes but when they appear clothed with bodies, which belong not naturally unto them, but for a time are assumed by them, 1 Sam. xxviii. 14; so the way by which Satan doth impart his temptations unto us is not always sensible, but often unperceivable by the outward senses; he doth most certainly tempt to sin, and yet the tempted sinner perceiveth him not: for as this spiritual and unperceivable way of tempting doth follow upon his spiritual and immaterial substance, so also the words rendered "the spirit which worketh," may relate either to his nature, as being spiritual, or to his way of working while he tempteth, to wit, by way of inspiration, and a kind of breathing: the words may be so constructed as to bear either, though the first be mainly intended: "The spirit that now worketh," or, his spirit now working.

10. Though there have been, and yet are, some fair flourishes of praiseworthy virtues and actions seemingly good in men unrenewed, Rom. ii. 14, yet every unrenewed man, and chiefly those who are come to age and understanding, are very slaves to sin, and so addicted to the actual service, though not of all and every sin in particular, (for

that were impossible) yet of some one idol or other, whether of their pleasure, profit, or credit, that they cannot but go on in the service of it, without all possibility of being reclaimed by any created strength: for so much is implied while unregenerate men are called "children of disobedience," that is, men addicted and given over to disobedience, so that they cannot be persuaded to relinquish it.

11. Satan's way of working in and with obstinate godless sinners is most efficacious and powerful. He cannot indeed work any change upon the will, by creating new principles or habits in it which before were not, as God doth, Jer. xxxi. 33; but he can not only tempt to sin, by propounding alluring baits and objects to the outward senses or inward fancy, which he may do to any man, whether good or bad, 2 Sam. xi. 2; but also when God judicially giveth over a sinner unto Satan, withdrawing even his restraining grace from him, then doth Satan multiply his temptations without any intermission, useth the utmost of created endeavours, whereby, and through God's up-giving the sinner formerly mentioned, and because of the seed and root of all sin, which is in the sinner by nature, there is no sort of wickedness unto the acting whereof Satan will not get him willingly driven and carried; for, saith he, "The spirit which now (that is, even in the mean time, constantly, and without intermitting the shortest moment, or now) worketh in the children of disobedience:" the word doth signify to work with pith and efficacy.

12. Though even the godly are not free from being tempted by Satan, yea, nor yet from yielding sometimes to his temptations, 1 Chron. xxi. 1, 2; yet he doth not work efficaciously in them, and so as is described in the former Doctrine; for he restricteth this way of Satan's working to unregenerate men; "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

VER. 3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The apostle doth now apply this doctrine to the Jews, of whom he himself was one; and therefore he designeth them by the pronoun "we," and affirmeth them to have been before conversion equally miserable with the Gentiles. In doing whereof, and that he may more fully explain this doctrine of man's misery, he sheweth, First, that even they had their conversation among those children of disobedience, as being no less obstinately rebellious against God than the disobedient Gentiles; following the "lusts," or the first motions and sudden flashes of their inbred corruption, (here called "flesh,") which flowing from Adam's first sin, hath infected his whole posterity, (Christ alone excepted, 2 Cor. v. 21,) and seated itself in all the powers and faculties of their souls and bodies, even the understanding and will not being excepted, Rom. viii. 7, Col. ii. 18; for so is the word "flesh" usually taken in the New Testament, John iii. 6, Gal. v.

13, 16. Now, all corruption and sin, even that which is in the mind, is called "flesh," because it is conveyed by fleshly generation, John iii. 6, the fleshly members of the body are the instruments whereby all is executed, Rom. vi. 19, and every sin draweth the man from God to things earthly and fleshly. Secondly, he subdivideth this inbred corruption of their natures into two heads: first, the "flesh," particularly so called, whereby, as it is distinguished from flesh before-mentioned, and opposed to the "mind" spoken of afterwards, must be meant that corruption which is seated in the inferior part of the soul, to wit, the sensual appetite; and next, the "mind," whereby is meant the most noble faculties of the soul, to wit, the will and understanding, in so far as they are also corrupted. Concerning both which he affirmeth, that even the Jews in their unconverted state were fulfilling their wills and desires; by which "desires" of the flesh, as they are distinguished from the lusts of the flesh formerly mentioned, are meant their deliberate and fixed resolution to follow those lusts and suggestions of corrupt flesh, which, accordingly, he sheweth they did fulfil and accomplish to the utmost. And, Thirdly, he pointeth at the root and fountain-cause of this their miserable slavery and subjection to sin, in the lusts and desires thereof, even their natural sin and misery, whereby they were from nature, that is, from their very cradle, birth, and conception, "children of wrath," as being, by reason of their original sin, liable to the stroke of God's eternal wrath, and as much liable to it as the Gentiles were.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is not any piece of a minister's task wherein he hath more need of a spirit of wisdom and impartiality, than when he is about the reproof of sin, and the discovery of people's vileness by reason of their wickedness; lest, if herein he respect persons, those whom he reflects upon must be irritated, as conceiving themselves to be unequally dealt with; and lest others to whom he doth apply that convincing doctrine neither so directly, nor with such an edge and vehemence, be puffed up in their own conceit above others: for the apostle holdeth forth the rest of what he hath to speak upon this subject of man's misery by nature in the person of the Jews, lest either the Gentiles had been irritated, or the Jews puffed up; "Among whom also we all had our conversation."

2. Whatever differences may be among unregenerate men as to things civil, externals in religion, or the particular sins unto which they are enslaved, yet all of them are alike vile in God's sight, children of disobedience, in whom Satan ruleth and worketh, in so far as they are all walking in the lusts of the flesh, following inbred corruption as their guide, and obeying it in some one or other of its lusts; for though there was neither civil commerce, nor religious fellowship betwixt the Jews and Gentiles, John iv. 9, though the Jews had many external religious privileges which the Gentiles did want, Rom. ix. 4, 5, and though some both of Jews and Gentiles were not enslaved to such vile and fleshly lusts as others were, Phil. iii. 6, yet Paul

pronounces of himself and all of them, that they were children of disobedience, because one way or other they followed the lusts of the flesh; "Among whom also we all had our conversation in the lusts of the flesh."

3. They who in their unconverted estate have led a blameless life before the world, (and therefore have thought their condition abundantly good, Phil. iii. 7,) will, when converting grace cometh, see themselves to have been as vile and wretched as any. They will not only see, that nothing they did was truly good and acceptable to God, as not being done in faith, Heb. xi. 6, but also that the root of all sin was in them, budding out without any check or restraint, except from respect to self-interest, credit, pleasure, or advantage, Matt. xiv. 5, and that the more blameless they were before the world, spiritual pride did abound the more, Phil. ii. 7, and so were more loathsome to God, James iv. 6; for Paul, whose life, even in his unrenewed estate, was blameless, Phil. iii. 6, being now converted, affirmeth of himself as well as of others, "Among whom also we all in time past had our conversation in the lusts of the flesh."

4. As the unregenerate man is powerfully tempted by Satan, and strongly encouraged by the common custom and example of others to sin against the Lord, so there is a corrupt nature within him, which maketh him readily entertain those external incitements, yea, and which would make him do mischief, though there were not a devil to tempt, nor any evil example to be followed; and therefore none of those allurements and temptations to sin from without, though never so strong, doth excuse the sinner, seeing they are no more ready to tempt than corrupt nature in him is willing to be tempted; for the apostle, having spoken of two guides of a natural man's sinful course, which are without him, the custom of the world, and Satan's suggestions, ver. 2, he addeth here a third, which is within him, and as forward as any of the former; "We," saith he, "had our conversation in the lusts of the flesh."

5. The whole man, both soul and body, is infected with sin by nature, so that not only the sensual part, but even his will and understanding, are corrupted by it, there being not only ignorance, but also mistakes of God and good in the understanding, 1 Cor. i. 23, a crooked perverseness and averseness from that which is spiritually good in the will, Rom. viii. 7; for Paul reckoneth even the mind, to wit, as it is corrupted, to be a part of flesh; "fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind."

6. There are several degrees of sin, whereof as the latter doth carry sin a step further on towards the height than the former, so the former maketh way for the latter; for first, there is "flesh," or the very inbred corruption of our natures. Secondly, "lusts of the flesh;" these are the first motions of inbred corruption towards unlawful objects, and such as go before deliberation and advice, and are forbidden, in so far as they relate to our neighbour, in the tenth command. Thirdly, the "desires," or wills of the flesh, which are somewhat more, even the heart's thorough consent to the sinful motion,

and a fixed resolution to act it after deliberation and advice, and is that kind of lust spoken of Matt. v. 28. And lastly, the "fulfilling" those wills and desires of the flesh, that is, the actual committing of sin so resolved upon.

7. Every unregenerate man, come to age and discretion, is a slave to sin in all the fore-mentioned degrees; for Paul affirmeth here of himself, the Jews and Gentiles before conversion, that not only flesh was in them, which did lust after unlawful objects, but that those lusts did come the length of fixed resolutions and desires, yea, and that they did fulfil and accomplish them; for though civilians do not fulfil the lusts of the fleshly appetite, yet they fulfil the desires of the mind by their pride, vanity of spirit, self-seeking, and such like; "We all had our conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind."

8. As all men are guilty of original sin by nature, and from the first moment of their conception, Psa. li. 5, and therefore, in the course of divine justice, liable to the stroke of God's vindictive wrath and anger, and this by nature also, so the misery of unregenerate men is never sufficiently seen, until it be traced up to this bitter root and fountain, even the sin and misery wherein they were born; for his saying they were children of wrath by nature, implieth they were also sinners by nature, seeing wrath doth always follow upon sin, and this he reserveth last, as that which was the root, fountain, and headstone of all their misery; "And were by nature the children of wrath."

9. Though those who are born within the visible church have a right to church privileges even from their birth and by nature, which others have not (see Gal. ii. ver. 15, Doct. 1,) yet all men, whether born within or without the church, are alike by nature as to the point of original sin inherent in all, and the desert of God's wrath following upon that sin, which wrath is due to all; for, saith he, speaking of the Jews, "We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," by which "others" he meaneth the unchurched Gentiles.

VER. 4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

The apostle having already set forth that miserable state wherein both Jew and Gentile were by nature and before conversion, he doth in the second place hold forth their delivery from that woful state, and that in such a lively, ravishing, and comprehensive strain of speech, as might not only inform their judgments, but also work upon their affections to embrace and adhere unto those truths which he here delivereth, according to his intended scope. And first, ver. 4, he declareth God to have been the prime author and efficient cause of their delivery, whom he calleth "rich in mercy," to show that he was acted herein, not from their worth, but his own abundant mercy, which attribute of mercy doth

speaking his favour and good-will, with relation to his people's misery. And withal, he sheweth that it was only his great and ancient love towards them, which set his mercy on work in order to their delivery.

Next, ver. 5, having resumed what he spoke of their miserable case, ver. 1, (but so, as he applyeth what was there spoken of the Gentiles only, unto himself and the other Jews, according to what was held forth, ver. 3,) he propoundeth the first branch of their delivery, to wit, "God's quickening of them together with Christ," whereby is meant the Lord's work of regeneration, and bestowing upon them a spiritual life of grace, in opposition to that spiritual death formerly spoken of, together with all those benefits which accompany and flow from regeneration in this life. And they are said to have been quickened with Christ, though not in their own persons, (for they were so quickened a long time after Christ's resurrection, in their effectual calling,) but they were then quickened in their head and attorney Jesus Christ, whose quickening after death was a sure pledge that they, every one in his own time, should be quickened also, 1 Cor. xv. 20, and that by the virtue purchased by Christ's death, Rom. viii. 11, and to be applied unto them by him, who is now alive, and liveth for evermore for that end, Heb. vii. 25; and therefore the apostle expresseth God's bestowing of this spiritual life upon them, by his quickening them with Christ. And before he mention the other pieces of their delivery, he doth in the close of this verse ascribe the whole work of their salvation to God's free grace, which is the same in effect with his mercy and love, spoken of ver. 4, only it further expresseth the freedom of those, in opposition to any merit or worth in the persons to be saved, which might procure their salvation.

DOCTRINES.

1. The ministers of Christ would not only inculcate the doctrine of sin and misery, but having insisted so much upon this subject as may serve to bring down that high conceit which people naturally have of their own righteousness, and to convince them of their need of Jesus Christ, a Saviour, then is it timeous for them to open up the riches of God's free grace and good-will, to save the vilest of sinners, and what he hath freely done for bringing about salvation to their hand; for the apostle, having set forth unto the life the natural misery of those Ephesians, doth now open up the rich treasures of God's free grace in Christ; "But God, who is rich in mercy."

2. The Lord's ministers, when they fall upon this subject of God's delivering lost sinners from their natural state of sin and misery through Christ, they would labour to speak to it so fully, affectionately, sensibly, and with such life and power, as that they may not only inform the understandings of the Lord's people in those truths, but also inflame their affections with love to them, and admiration at the wisdom, mercy, goodness, and other attributes of God manifested in this work; for so doth the apostle speak of this purpose, not simply by saying God hath

quickened us, but "God, who is rich in mercy, according to his great love," and so forward in the two following verses.

3. There is nothing contributeth more to enable a minister to speak to the commendation of God's free grace in the salvation of sinners, with that fulness, sense, life, and affection, as he ought, than a deep insight into his own misery, and the great need which he himself doth stand in of God's mercy; for Paul, in the third verse foregoing, doth show how sensible he was of the depth and breadth of his own misery; hence he doth here speak so fully and movingly to the present purpose; "But God, who is rich in mercy," &c.

4. The quickening of sinners, and drawing them out of nature unto grace, is only God's work, there being no less required for bringing this about, than omnipotent creating power; see ver. 10. And there being not only no principle left in man, who is by nature dead in sins and trespasses, whereby he might work or concur with God in working towards his own quickening, Rom. ix. 16, but also much to oppose and resist it, 2 Cor. x. 5, so that in the first instant of his conversion, and until a new heart be given him, and the seeds and habits of saving graces infused in him, he is wholly passive as to any actual influence upon the effect which is wrought, Jer. xxxi. 33; for Paul here, condescending upon the cause of their quickening, doth pitch, not upon their own free-will, in whole or in part, but upon God only, while he saith, "But God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us."

5. This attribute of mercy in God, whereby without any grief or perturbation of mind, (which accompanieth men in the exercise of mercy,) he hath a propension and inclination to do good to the sinful and miserable, so far as his wisdom seeth convenient, is the only thing in opposition unto all that is in a man's self, which moveth God to quicken and bestow grace upon dead and graceless sinners; for the apostle, speaking of God's quickening of those Ephesians, describeth him from his mercy, to show it was not their worth, but his own mercy, which moved him to quicken them; "But God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us."

6. As God is rich and overflowing in the exercise of this attribute of mercy, which will appear, if we consider that there is no creature towards which he doth not exercise his mercy, Psa. civ. 24, and that mercy is exercised, not only without, but also often contrary to the deserving of those upon whom it is exercised, Ezek xxxvi. 21, 22, so there is nothing wherein God doth more manifest the riches and abundance of his mercy, than in the work of quickening dead sinners, and of carrying on the work of grace in them, until it be perfected in glory. The misery, Ezek xvi. 3, &c., and bad deservings of the object, Jer. xiv. 7, the great good things which are bestowed upon those miserable objects, Luke xii. 32, the course taken for satisfying divine justice, that so those good things might be without wronging of justice bestowed, John iii. 16, and the multitude of sins which mercy covereth in those objects, not only before their conversion, Isa. lv. 7, but also after it, Prov. xxiv. 16;—all these, and many consi-

derations besides these, do manifest God to be rich in mercy in quickening of dead sinners: "But God, who is rich in mercy, hath quickened us."

7. The highest cause which moveth God to manifest this his rich and special mercy upon any of lost mankind, and from mercy to quicken them, and bestow his saving graces on them, was his love towards them, which is no other than his will and resolution to impart those good things unto them, together with his hearty acquiescence in the thing, as that wherewith he is well pleased. He did it because he would do it, and had pleasure in the doing of it: for, saith he, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love—hath quickened us."

8. As God's love towards those whom he converteth doth not begin when they are converted, but is of a more ancient, even an eternal rise, chap. i. 4; so it is not an ordinary, but a great love wherewith he loveth them. The infinite distance betwixt him and them, *Psa. viii. 4*, his loving them when they were yet enemies, *Rom. v. 8*, the great things bestowed by his love, *Rom. v. 6—8*, and his unchangeableness in his love, even notwithstanding of great provocations to the contrary, *Psa. lxxxix. 33*—all these, and many besides these, do abundantly declare that this love is a great, wonderful, and matchless love: for, saith he, "For his great love, wherewith he loved us."

9. The Lord hath love to the elect, even when they are children of wrath, and liable in the course of justice to the stroke of his vindictive anger: for although God could not, with safety of his own justice, bestow heaven upon them, when they were actually such; yet nothing hindereth why he might not love them being such, that is, have a will and fixed resolution, even when they were liable unto wrath, to bestow heaven upon them, having first from that same love given his own Son to deliver them from that state of wrath; that so what eternal love had resolved to give them, might be actually bestowed upon them, without doing injury to divine justice: for, *ver. 3*, he sheweth they were children of wrath, and here that God loved them, and both these before he quickened them; "Wherewith he loved us," saith he, even in the by-past time.

10. The doctrine of our natural misery and spiritual death through sin, is a lesson most necessary to be learned, which we have no great pleasure to learn, and which we are prone to forget, as to a deep and lively impression of it, even when it is learned: for the apostle's repeating this doctrine, almost in the same words by which he had expressed it, *ver. 1*, doth hint at all these: "Even when we were dead in sins," saith he.

11. There is no application of the doctrine of God's mercy in order to our delivery from sin and misery, except the doctrine of sin and misery be first applied and taken with: for Paul, being to apply God's mercy in quickening sinners, unto himself and his countrymen the believing Jews, he doth first apply the doctrine of natural sin and misery unto them, while he doth now speak of himself and the Jews also; whereas, *ver. 1*, he spoke of the Gentiles only, as appeareth by the change of the person: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us."

12. Whatever a man be before his conversion, as to the point of civility and right use of his natural parts; yet, he is looked upon by God when he cometh to quicken him, as one dead in sins, who can neither help himself, nor merit help at God's hand: for therefore doth the apostle assert that they were dead in sins immediately before, yea, and in the act of God's quickening of them, while he saith, "Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us."

13. The state of grace which sinners, dead by nature, are brought unto at their conversion, and wherein they continue until death, is a state of life; the sentence of eternal death which they were liable unto, *ver. 3*, being taken off, *Rom. viii. 1*, there being also new principles and powers infused in them at their effectual calling, whereby they are enabled to do those actions of a spiritual life, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27*, which powers are also continually actuated and excited to their work by renewed influence from the Spirit of God, *Phil. ii. 13*, and accompanied oftentimes in their actings with assurance of God's love, *Rom. viii. 16*, peace of conscience, *Rom. v. 1, 2*, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, *1 Pet. i. 8*, whereby also they have not only a right unto, *John iii. 16*, but also the first fruits and begun possession of eternal life, *John xvii. 3*; for the apostle expresseth God's bringing them to, and continuing them in the state of grace by his quickening of them; "hath quickened us," saith he.

14. Though love and mercy in God do set him on work to quicken dead sinners; yet this work cannot be brought about or accomplished without the intervention of Christ's merit and intercession, who behaved to satisfy divine justice, and thereby acquire unto us those things which love and mercy had prepared for us, *Isa. liii. 5*, seeming they were all lost in Adam, *Rom. v. 15, 16*, and who, being now exalted, doth also apply them to us, *Acts v. 31*, for, notwithstanding of what was said, *ver. 4*, of God's mercy and love, as the inward impulsive causes moving God to quicken them, yet the apostle here sheweth, that their actual quickening had a necessary dependence upon Christ's merit and mediation, while he saith, "He hath quickened us together with Christ."

15. That Jesus Christ behaved of necessity to strike in with his merit and mediation, hereby to acquire and apply saving grace and salvation unto us, doth in nothing hinder, but that notwithstanding our complete salvation, from the first step unto the last, doth wholly flow from God's free grace; seeing it was of grace that the Father did send the Son to die for us, *John iii. 16*. It was of grace that the Son did undertake, *John xv. 12, 13*; and it is no less grace that what he did or suffered should be accepted in our name, *Rom. iii. 24, 25*. So that all is of grace and free goodwill, as to us: for the apostle, having pointed at the necessity of Christ's mediation, in order to their quickening, doth presently add, as in a parenthesis, "by grace are ye saved."

16. There is an infallible connexion betwixt converting grace and salvation; so that all those who are now converted and quickened, shall be undoubtedly saved; for what the apostle calleth "quickened" in the former part of the verse,

he calleth "saved" in the close, so that he taketh the one for the other: "He hath quickened us—by grace are ye saved."

VER. 6. And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

Here are the other two branches of their delivery, to wit, first, the raising of their bodies at the last day; for their spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to newness of life was mentioned, ver. 5. Secondly, their glorification in heaven: both which are yet to come, 2 Tim. ii. 18, Matt. xxv. 34. And yet he speaketh of them as already past, when the Father raised and glorified Christ; because, seeing Christ, in his resurrection and entering of heaven, did sustain a public person, representing all the elect, as their head and attorney-general, John x. 15; therefore he was judicially looked upon by God in those actions, as if all the elect had risen when he rose, and taken possession of heaven when he did enter it: hence it is, that in the close of the verse it is added, "in Christ," to show we are not yet raised and glorified in our own persons, but in Christ our head. And the Spirit of God doth choose to set forth their future resurrection and glorification, by showing these are already accomplished in Christ their head, rather than by saying, God shall raise them up and glorify them, that he may with one and the same labour point out the dependence which their resurrection and glorification have upon Christ, as the effect upon the cause, the thing promised upon the pledge thereof, as also the undoubted certainty that those shall come to pass, a certainty greater than that of a simple prediction and promise, even such certainty as the giving of a pledge, and holding forth of an effectual and necessary cause do give for performance of the thing promised: for Christ's resurrection is both a pledge, 1 Cor. xv. 20, and cause of our resurrection, Rom. viii. 11, which holdeth also in his glorification.

DOCTRINES.

1. The fruits and effects of God's eternal love and mercy, and of Christ's merit toward the elect, are not confined within this present life, but are in a great part to have their accomplishment after time, when the bodies of believers shall be raised up in glory at the last day, and they perfectly glorified with Christ in heaven for ever; for those two fruits of the Father's love, and of Christ's merit, even the resurrection and glorification of believers, are here expressed, while it is said, "and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places."

2. Those, and those only, shall partake of the resurrection of the just, which is to life everlasting, John v. 29; and shall be glorified hereafter, whom God doth quicken by converting grace here: for those three parts of the delivery of lost sinners, are of equal latitude: "He hath quickened us, raised us up, and made us sit in heavenly places."

3. As it is a thing full of difficulty to be believed, that after worms have consumed this flesh

of ours, it shall be raised up in glory, and that we, who are heirs of hell and children of wrath, shall one day reign with Christ for ever; so those are things, not only sure in themselves, but which the Lord would have converted and quickened believers assured of; that so their comfort under crosses might be more abounding, 2 Cor. iv. 14, with 16—18, and their courage against death more strong, 1 Thess. iv. 18, and that they in all things may live as becometh those who not only shall rise and take possession of glory in their own persons, but also are already risen and glorified with and in Christ their head, Col. iii. 1, even by having their conversation in heaven, while they are yet upon earth, Phil. iii. 20, for that they might be persuaded of their future resurrection and glorification, the Spirit of God doth speak of them as already done, viz. in the sense given in the exposition: "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places."

VER. 7. That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The apostle, thirdly, propoundeth the final cause, or the end intended by God to be brought about by his gracious working, formerly mentioned, towards those Ephesians and first converts among the Jews, even that in all ages succeeding the present unto the end of the world, God might give an evident proof and infallible demonstration (for so much doth the word rendered "show," signify) of the "exceeding riches of his grace," that is, how far the abundance of his mercy and favour toward sinners doth exceed all expression and created comprehension, the setting forth whereof to the following ages, was intended by God, not only for his own glory, as chap. i. 12—14, but also for the encouragement of all vile sinners unto the world's end, to draw nigh unto God for mercy in Christ, as being animated hereto by this example and infallible evidence of the exceeding riches of God's grace; for so doth the apostle more fully explain his own meaning, 1 Tim. i. 16. And in the close of the verse, he sheweth wherein that convincing evidence doth lie, by giving a short comprehensive sum of all he hath spoken from the beginning of the chapter, even in God's kindness, that is, all those effects formerly mentioned of his mercy, love, and free grace, flowing from his good, gentle, and bountiful disposition; and this "towards them" whose misery was formerly described: and "through Christ," as the purchaser and applier of all those.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there is grace, yea riches and abundance of grace in God, even such as exceed all expression, 2 Sam. vii. 20, all comprehension, Isa. lv. 9, yea, and all the sins of creatures, Rom. v. 20, so, the more a man doth dwell upon this sweet subject, his thoughts and apprehensions of it will be the more enlarged, and his expressions also will in some measure go along with his thoughts: for

the apostle, having before (ver. 4,) expressed it under the name of riches in mercy, and falling here upon the same subject again, his thoughts of it are more enlarged, and his expression doth rise accordingly ; so that it is now, not only riches, but "exceeding riches of his grace."

2. As it is a matter full of difficulty for those who are sensible of their own vileness, to believe the exceeding riches of God's grace towards lost sinners, and to believe it especially with application unto themselves, Acts ii. 37, so, the particular instances and examples of God's mercy and grace towards others, have a peculiar fitness and efficacy in them to convince us, how exceedingly gracious God is, and so to convince us, as we may be encouraged to draw nigh to that same fountain of rich grace for pardon and life unto ourselves, 1 Tim. i. 16, a fitness beyond what is in the simple doctrinal declaration of those riches of grace; in so far as those instances and examples do speak, not only that mercy and grace may be had, but that it hath been attained unto, and by those who in all respects did judge themselves, and were really as unworthy of it, as unable to lay hold upon it in the mean time, and to make good use of it afterwards, as we do judge ourselves; so that the ice is broken, and the ford ridden before us: for the apostle sheweth that God gave such instances of mercy and grace in those primitive Christians, that he "might show forth," as it were, by demonstration and evidence, "the exceeding riches of his grace," and this in order to the encouragement of others to venture their salvation upon that same grace, as we show in the exposition.

3. The more sinful, miserable, and wretched they are, to whom the Lord is gracious, there is the more convincing proof given of the exceeding riches of his grace, and so a greater encouragement for those who are yet in their graceless state to roll themselves over upon this his rich grace, and to expect good from it: for it was the quickening of such vile sinners, whose misery is described, ver. 1—3, which did tend to show forth the exceeding riches of his grace, which the apostle also hinteth at, while, showing wherein that convincing evidence did lie, he saith, "his kindness towards us:" the word "us" is emphatic as to the purpose in hand.

4. It was a thing resolved upon by God, revealed to his servants, and accordingly made known by them to the church, that the glorious light of the gospel, though opposed by the fury and industry of men and devils; yet should never be totally extinct, but was to be preached, believed, and obeyed in some places at least of the world throughout all ages to the world's end: for the apostle sheweth it was God's design to have the exceeding riches of his grace shown forth in all succeeding ages and generations; "that in the ages to come he might show."

5. God's bypast dealing, whether in mercy, or judgment, 1 Cor. x. 6, are speaking lessons unto those who are in the ages following, as holding forth both matter of praise unto God manifested in those, Psa. cxxxvi. 10, &c. as also matter of instruction, in our duty, to us, 1 Cor. x. 6. so that the after-ages, in this respect, are better ages than the former, in so far as the latter have

the advantage of those examples in the former ages, which they themselves did want; for the apostle sheweth, the benefit of God's gracious dealing with believers in the present age, should accresce unto the following ages; "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace."

6. As all those benefits which come to believers, do flow from the kindness of God, or his native willingness to employ what goodness is in him for the good of his creatures; so, though the effects of his general kindness and benevolence, which are common to all the creatures, Psa. cxlv. 9, do flow from God, as creator, in the channel of common providence, Psa. civ. 28, yet, the effects of his special kindness, and such as relate to life and godliness, do all of them flow from God, as reconciled through Christ, and are conveyed through the conduit of Christ's merit and intercession: for the apostle, summing up all these saving benefits, together with the way how they are conveyed, he saith, "In his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

7. The lively and serious consideration of those excellent benefits flowing from God's mercy, grace, good-will, and bounty, together with the consideration of the vileness and wretchedness of those upon whom those excellent benefits are bestowed, and of the way which infinite wisdom, set on work by eternal love, hath found out for conveying those so excellent mercies to such base and unworthy objects, even the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and high exaltation of Jesus Christ; I say, it is the consideration of all those jointly, which tendeth to set forth most convincingly how exceedingly gracious God is: for the apostle sheweth this convincing evidence doth lie in those three, first, "in his kindness," secondly, "towards us," thirdly, "through Jesus Christ."

VER. 8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*

The apostle, fourthly, while he giveth a reason of what is said, ver. 7, (as appeareth by the causal particle, *for*) doth sum up all which hath been spoken from ver. 4, in this one comprehensive proposition, that their complete salvation, from the first step unto the last, did flow from God's grace and favour, (for by grace here must be meant God's free favour and grace in him, not the effects of this grace, good works, or grace inherent in us; for those are expressly excluded, ver. 9,) and withal, that they were so saved by grace, as faith was not excluded; this grace of faith being the hand, or instrument, whereby we lay hold upon, and apply to ourselves Jesus Christ, and his righteousness offered freely in the gospel, in order to our salvation, Rom. iii. 25; and, secondly, because the establishing of them in this truth, is his main scope through the whole first part of the epistle, therefore he doth here not only explain in what sense salvation doth flow from grace, but also doth expressly confirm it by arguments, first, by removing all things in general, which could be called theirs,

whether prerogative, privilege, natural, or acquired worth, from being the meritorious procuring cause of their salvation, or of any part of it; the truth whereof is more than evident from what is said of their spiritual death in sins and trespasses, ver. 1—3, and therefore he needeth not bring any new argument to prove it. Secondly, by asserting from that same ground, that their salvation was God's gift, and therefore it behoved to be free, and of grace, else it could not be a gift.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the ascribing of salvation unto works, is not wholly inconsistent with and destructive of God's grace from having any influence upon salvation, seeing Adam's salvation, even according to the tenor of the covenant of works, had been also of grace in some respect, it being of grace that God did enter any covenant with man at all, and of grace also that he did accept, even of man's perfect obedience, so as upon his performance of it to make him sure of eternal life; yet the ascribing of salvation, or any part of it, unto the merit or worth of works, doth obscure, and is inconsistent with, that exceeding riches of grace, which God intendeth to set forth by that way of salvation which is propounded in the covenant of grace: for the apostle being here to prove, that God's way of saving those Ephesians was a fit mean to set forth the exceeding riches of his grace, giveth this for a reason, even that their salvation did flow only from grace, and from nothing in themselves, nor any work of theirs, so that if it did not flow only from grace, and from nothing in themselves, it could not demonstrate those exceeding riches of his grace: for, saith he, "Ye are saved by grace, and that not of yourselves; not of works."

2. Whatever differences may be among several persons in other things; yet all come of Adam by ordinary generation are equal, as in their common misery by nature, so in the way of their delivery from that misery by free grace through a Redeemer, there being no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus, Acts iv. 12; for therefore doth the apostle so frequently change the person in this first part of the chapter, while he sometimes speaketh of the Ephesians and Gentiles alone in the second person, as ver. 1, sometimes of himself, and of the Jews with them in the first person, as ver. 5, 6; not as if some part of the purpose did belong only to the one alone, and some part of it unto both jointly: for in one and the same purpose he changeth the person, as while he giveth a reason in this verse of what he spoke ver. 7, but rather to show, that the purpose here insisted on, which is man's misery by nature, and their delivery from that misery by free grace and Christ, doth belong equally to Jew and Gentile: and therefore he standeth not much to which of them he doth speak; for "by grace are ye saved," saith he.

3. As believers are in some sense already saved, not only because they have salvation begun in their new birth, which is a passing from death unto life, 1 John iii. 14, but also they have complete salvation in right and title, 1 Cor. iii.

21, 22, and in the earnest of it, Eph. i. 14, so, the whole work of their salvation, from its first step in regeneration unto its last step in their glorification, doth entirely flow from God's free grace, and from none of their worth: for, he saith, "ye are saved," in the time bypast, and ascribeth it to grace, "by grace ye are saved."

4. The maintaining of the interest of free grace in our salvation, as being the alone impulsive cause thereof, in opposition to our worth, is a thing that the Spirit of the Lord is very careful of, the glory of his free grace being all which he seeketh after in our salvation, chap. i. 6, and a thing which men do naturally incline to intrench upon, and to rob him of, either in whole or in part, Rom. x. 3; for therefore doth the apostle so frequently show the dependence which salvation hath upon God's mercy, love, and free grace, ver. 4, 5; and here, "by grace are ye saved."

5. Free grace and faith do well agree in the bringing about our salvation: neither is salvation the less of free grace, that it is also of faith; seeing faith is not only a fruit of God's grace in us, Phil. i. 29, but also and mainly, because faith doth not justify or save us for any worth in itself, or as it is a work, (for all works are excluded, ver. 9,) but for the worth of its object, Jesus Christ, and of his righteousness, Rom. v. 19, which faith apprehendeth, Phil. iii. 9, for the apostle ascribeth their salvation both to grace and faith; "Ye are saved by grace through faith."

6. Though God's free grace, favour, and goodwill doth freely bestow that salvation upon the elect, which Christ by his merit hath purchased; yet the wisdom of God hath thought it fitting that this salvation shall not be actually bestowed, until the person to be saved do lay hold by faith upon the offer of salvation in the gospel, and of Christ's righteousness, whereby salvation is acquired, that so the heirs of glory may not only have a right to heaven by faith, before they come to the actual possession of it, John iii. 16, but also be made meet to partake of that heavenly inheritance, Col. i. 12, their natures being renewed, when the habit of faith is wrought in them by God, 2 Cor. v. 17, and their hearts also being purified by the exercise of that grace, Acts xv. 9; for, saith he, "By grace are ye saved through faith."

7. The ascribing of salvation to God's free grace, though it doth not exclude Christ's merit, and the act of faith, as embracing the righteousness of Christ, (see Doct. 5,) yet it excludeth all things in ourselves, whether dignity of our nature, the enjoyment of civil or ecclesiastic privileges, nobility of descent, all our common or more special gifts and endowments, whether of nature or grace, from having any meritorious or causal influence in bestowing either a right to salvation, or the possession of it: for Paul opposeth these two, "By grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves."

8. As heaven and salvation are God's gift; so they are such a gift, as is freely given by God, who is not induced thereto by any thing in the person to whom it is given, whether sense of benefit already received, or hope of any benefit

to be received from him in time coming, which occasioneth the bestowing of gifts among men; salvation is indeed a gift, but not such a gift: for it is a gift without all rise from any thing in ourselves; "And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," saith he.

VER. 9. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He further explaineth in what sense their salvation did come from free grace, and proveth it by other two arguments, which do also confirm the two former. The first, taken from the removal of those things in particular from having any meritorious or causal influence upon their salvation, which all men have a kind of natural propensity to rely upon for salvation, to wit, their works, and those even their good works; for so doth he explain himself, ver. 10, whence it followeth that they were saved of grace, and not of themselves. The second is taken from the end aimed at by God in contriving the plot of lost man's salvation, to wit, that all ground of glorification might be taken away from man, as being, in the meanest respect, a saviour to himself, and that all the glory might be ascribed completely unto God in Christ, (see 1 Cor. i. 30, 31;) which end could not have been obtained, except they had been saved by grace, and not of themselves.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the word grace, in Scripture, be sometimes taken for the saving graces of God's Spirit in us, 2 Pet. iii. 18, yet, when salvation is ascribed unto God's grace, we are always to understand grace in God, that is, his free favour and good-will, and not grace inherent in us, or good works, the exercise of that grace: for the apostle establisheth grace, ascribing our salvation to it, and excludeth grace inherent and good works, which were inconsistent, if they were the self-same thing; "Not of works," saith he.

2. The salvation of believers doth so much flow from free grace, as that all works of theirs, even their good works, are thereby excluded from having any meritorious influence upon it: for even our best works are imperfect, Isa. lxiv. 6; they are a debt, which we owe unto God, Luke xvii. 10; the power and activity whereby we do them is given of God, Phil. ii. 13, and therefore we can merit nothing, and least of all salvation by them, at God's hand. Thus the apostle explaineth how we are saved by grace, even so as to exclude all works; "Not of works," saith he.

3. Though a man may boast and glory of the good things which God hath given him, in some respects, (see upon Gal. vi. ver. 4, Doct. 5,) yet the way wherein salvation is conveyed unto sinners, is so contrived, that no ground is left for man to boast in himself for any thing which his wisdom, goodness, power, or worth do contribute for bringing of his own salvation about, either in part or in whole: from the first step thereof, election, unto the last, his glorification, man and his worth are still depressed, and God and his free grace always exalted; for the apostle sheweth

this was the end God did aim at, even "lest any man should boast."

4. In so far as works, even good works, have place in the matter of man's salvation, so far hath man matter of boasting, and ascribing the glory of his salvation to himself, and holding back the glory of it from God: for although good works do come wholly from the Spirit of God, in so far as they are good; yet they are our works, in so far as they are wrought by us, being now renewed and enabled to work by influence from God; and therefore heaven and salvation should in that case be given unto us for the virtue and worth of somewhat which is ours; for Paul affirmeth that works, even good works, which "we are created unto in Christ Jesus," ver. 10, are excluded from having any causal influence upon salvation; "lest any man should boast," implying, if works were not excluded, man should have ground of boasting. See Rom. iii. 27.

VER. 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Lest the apostle, by commending grace and excluding works from being the cause of their salvation, should have seemed to juggle out works, and a holy life, as altogether unnecessary; therefore, in this verse he sheweth that the study of good works is of absolute necessity required in those who are to be saved; because all such, whether Jew or Gentile, (for he speaketh in the first person, including himself and the believing Jews) are God's workmanship, that is, renewed, and made over again by God's creating power through the intervening mediation of Christ Jesus; and this of purpose, that they may make conscience of good works: yea, and further, God, who had predestinated them to heaven, had also decreed and prepared good works for them, as the way wherein they behaved of necessity to walk in their journey to heaven: which, as it proveth the undeniable necessity of good works, so it also confirmeth that they neither were nor could be saved by works; because the power whereby they did good works did follow upon their regeneration, and was given them freely by God. As also, God had prepared good works, that they should walk towards heaven in them, but not to merit heaven by them.

DOCTRINES.

1. Believers are God's workmanship, not only by natural creation, but supernatural renovation; they are not only once made, but made over again; not by having the substance of their soul and natural powers thereof destroyed, and new ones substantially different from those substituted in their place, but by having the vicious qualities which were in those subdued and weakened, and contrary graces and virtues implanted in their stead, Eph. iv. 22,—24; for saith Paul, "we are his workmanship." The word signifieth a thing of his making, whereby

he meaneth, not God's first making of them as men, but his making of them over again as renewed men, which appeareth from what followeth, his creating them in Christ, and unto good works.

2. As the making of sinners over again and new creatures, is only God's work; so the power whereby he so maketh us, is no less than creating power, much like unto that power whereby in the beginning he made some things of nothing and some things of pre-existing matter, but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for those things to be made of it, Gen. ii. 7, 22, considering, that in this great and mighty work of God he maketh those who were wholly indisposed to good, and averse from it, Psa. lxxx. 11, yea, perverse resisters of all motions towards that which is godly and holy, John xxi. 14, to be true lovers of it, and walkers in it: for this much is implied, while he saith, "we are his workmanship, created," &c.

3. Christ behaved to strike in as mediator betwixt God and us, before we could be made this new workmanship; the life which we have by this new creation, being purchased by his death, 1 John iv. 9, and applied unto us by his power, after he is now arisen from death, Acts v. 31. The furniture, whereupon the actions of this life are performed, coming also from him, John xv. 5; for saith he, "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

4. Believers are made new creatures, not to live idly, or to work wickedly, but that they may in the whole course of their life make conscience of good works: which are not only works of charity, or duties of immediate worship, but every duty, whether of worship, Acts x. 2, or of our callings, Acts ix. 36, 39, whether to God, or man, or to ourselves, Tit. ii. 12, which is warranted in the word as lawful, or commanded as necessary, Mic. vi. 8, gone about by a man regenerate, and in Christ, Matt. vii. 17, 18, by virtue of influence from the Spirit of Christ, Phil. ii. 13, for God's glory, as the main end of the worker, 1 Cor. x. 31, and with due respect had to all necessary circumstances, Psa. i. 3, every duty of that kind, so gone about, is a good work, which Paul saith "they were created unto in Christ Jesus, even unto good works."

5. Though many actions of unregenerate men are materially good, and very useful both for themselves and others, Rom. ii. 14, yet no unregenerate man can do any work, which is spiritually good and acceptable to God; even their good works are but shining sins, as being destitute of a great part of these necessary requisites unto a good work, mentioned in the former doctrine: for Paul sheweth that a man must be a new creature and God's workmanship, before he can do a good work; for "we are," saith he, "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

6. Though good works be not necessary to merit or purchase salvation, yet are they necessary unto those who are justified and saved, in several respects, not only as they are the necessary fruit and end of regeneration, and as they are the way which leadeth to heaven, (their necessity in both which respects is grounded upon the present scripture,) but they are necessary

also, as evidences of our right to salvation, 1 John iii. 14, as a guard to preserve peace with our own consciences, 2 Cor. i. 12, as evidences of our thankfulness to God and Christ, who hath freely saved us, 1 Pet. ii. 9, and for the edification of others, Matt. v. 16; for the apostle's scope is to prove, that as we are not saved by works, so that good works are necessary in other respects; "We are created unto good works, which he hath fore-ordained that we should walk in them."

7. Christians are like unto those who walk in a journey from one place unto another, through a straight and beaten way which lieth betwixt, in so far as they advance from sin, Ezek. xviii. 31, to heaven, Phil. iii. 14, in the way of holiness and good works: for the word rendered to walk, whereby he expreseth what should be the daily exercise of a renewed man, is a metaphor taken from those who travel in a journey, and he maketh the way wherein they walk to be good works; "which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

8. The Lord hath prepared and made ready good works, as a beaten path, wherein his renewed people may walk without any discouraging or perplexing difficulty, in so far as he not only hath ordained in his eternal and unchangeable decree, that they shall make conscience of good works, which seemeth to be mainly meant by his fore-ordaining of good works here spoken of, but he doth also hold forth the rule of good works in his word, Psa. cxix. 9, and by examples also, which make the rule more easy to be followed, Heb. xii. 1; he reneweth their wills, and furnisheth them with inward power and ability to do these works, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, and exciteth and actuateth that power by his renewed influence, thereby making it to work, Phil. ii. 13; in all which respects, good works may be said to be prepared by God, as the word, rendered fore-ordained, may also read; "which God hath fore-ordained," or "prepared, that we should walk in them."

VER. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

Here beginneth the second part of the chapter, where the apostle, for the further establishment of those Ephesians in the doctrine of salvation through free grace in Christ, doth more largely insist upon the former purpose contained in the first part of the chapter, with a more particular application of it to the Ephesians, and in them to all the Gentiles. And, first, (by exhorting them to remember their former misery, while they were in Gentilism,) he giveth, in this and the following verse, a most lively description of their then miserable state, as first, that they were "in the flesh," that is, the flesh of their foreskin not being cut off by circumcision, they were not only destitute of that ordinance, but also of all other soul-saving ordinances of God's worship, unto the enjoying whereof circumcision gave a right and entrance, Exod. xii. 44. Secondly,

this their miserable estate was matter also of their reproach; the Jews making their want of circumcision a continual upcast unto them, which he hinteth at by showing that the carnal Jews, who were only circumcised in the flesh by the hands of men, but not in their hearts by the Spirit of God, did not cease to reproach the converted Christian Gentiles with uncircumcision, even at that present time, when circumcision and the rest of those Levitical ordinances were now abrogated.

DOCTRINES

1. Even believers having attained to the sense of God's mercy in Christ, are very prone to forget that woe and misery which they were under, before their delivery from it: for the watchword here given to those Ephesians, supposeth so much; "Wherefore remember," saith he.

2. Those who are converted, ought frequently to remember and call to mind their sin and misery, under which they were before God showed them mercy, though not to take pleasure in the remembrance of it, Ezek. xxiii. 19, 21, nor to despair of or question God's mercy in order to their delivery from it, Isa. i. 18; yet, that hereby they may be provoked to pity towards others, who are yet in that state, Tit. iii. 2, 3, to greater fruitfulness in good works for the time to come, Rom. vi. 19, and to magnify the riches of God's mercy in their delivery from that woful state, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, and that they may be kept humble under their present enjoyments, Ezek. xx. 43; for therefore doth the apostle exhort those Ephesians to remember their former sin and misery; "Wherefore remember," saith he, "that in times past ye were."

3. Christians, in order to the more effectual bringing about of the forementioned ends, ought not only remember that sin and misery, which was common unto them with others, but also, and chiefly, would search out, and call to mind wherein their sin and misery did exceed the sin and misery of others: for Paul biddeth them here remember that misery, which in a great part was peculiar unto themselves as Gentiles, and which they had more than the Jews; "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh."

4. The consideration of God's rich grace through Jesus Christ, whereby alone he carrieth on the salvation of lost sinners in all its steps, may be a great encouragement, and a strong argument to enforce this duty of searching out and calling to mind our matchless sin and misery: and that because this rich grace hath not only a remedy for all our sin and misery in it, Rom. v. 20; but also it is most perceived and felt in its sweet and lively effects, when the soul is most affected with the sense of its own vileness, Luke xv. 21, 22; for the apostle, having spoken of God's rich grace, whereby we are saved through faith, in Christ, he inferreth as a conclusion thence, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh."

5. Though it is now, under the New Testament, no more, but much less miserable to be born a Gentile, than to be born a Jew, Rom. xi. 20, yet to have been born a Gentile, and not of Abraham's race, was once, to wit, before Christ

came in the flesh, a sad and miserable lot: for when he is calling to mind their former misery, he biddeth them "remember that they were in time past Gentiles."

6. Those who are born without the bounds of the church, and live not under the drop of divine ordinances, are in a poor and woful case, as being not only under wrath, and destitute of any actual interest in the blessing, (which piece of misery is common to them with all the unregenerate, whether within or without the visible church, see ver. 2,) but destitute also of all those means whereby the blessing useth to be conveyed, Rom. x. 14, 15, so that their salvation is not in an ordinary way possible: for while he is calling to mind their former misery, he biddeth them "remember they were Gentiles in the flesh," that is, destitute of circumcision, the leading ordinance, and consequently destitute of all ordinances; having no part nor communion with God's church, neither outwardly nor spiritually, as he explaineth himself, ver. 12.

7. As the contemning, even of outward ordinances, is no small sin before God, 1 Sam. ii. 17, with 24, so it is matter of just reproach before men, which did hold especially in the contempt of circumcision under the Old Testament; it being then a seal of the covenant, Gen. xvii. 10, the outward badge of the Lord's people, Gen. xvii. 14, and a leading ordinance, giving right and entrance to the enjoyment of all other ordinances, Exod. xii. 44, and it doth no less hold in baptism under the New Testament, seeing the sacraments of the New Testament are of as much worth as the sacraments of the Old; and baptism serveth for the same ends now which are presently mentioned to have been the uses for which circumcision did serve then: for although Paul doth only mention expressly that uncircumcision was unjustly cast up to the Christian Gentiles by the carnal and hypocritical Jews in the present time wherein he wrote; yet hereby he would have them to remember how this was matter of just reproach and upcast unto them, even from the godly Jews in former times, when circumcision stood in force, and that this disgrace and reproach was a part of their former misery. See 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36, "who are called uncircumcision," &c.

8. There are two things in every sacrament, to wit, an outward action upon the outward man by the outward instrument, and an inward action upon the inward man by the hand and Spirit of God; for so it was in circumcision; the outward action being here expressed by "circumcision in the flesh, made with hands," which implieth there was another inward action spoken of, Col. ii. 11.

9. There are not a few within the visible church who rest upon the outward action done by man in the sacrament, as if that alone were sufficient, and do not seek after that which God doth inwardly work upon the heart; and so do use sacraments as sorcerers do their charms and spells, where the bare rehearsing of some set form of words, with such a composed strain of outward carriage and gesture, is relied upon for the producing of wonderful effects: for of this sort were those who are here called "the circumcision in the flesh, made by hands," that is, such

who rested upon the outward action, and sought after no more but it.

10. They have very frequently least of religion in reality and effect who are most puffed up with the conceit of their own religion, and make greatest noise about things least necessary in religion, or which are in themselves indifferent, as if the greatest stress of religion did lie in those; for those who boasted themselves of their religion and circumcision against the uncircumcised Gentiles, and did place their whole religion in circumcision, and the rest of those Mosaical ordinances now abolished, were "the circumcision in the flesh made with hands," that is, such as had only the outward form of religion, but not the life and power of it.

11. As it is a great reproach to be despisers of ordinances, so it is but a poor credit for people to have ordinances, if they rest upon the outside of them, not labouring to have life and power conveyed from God through them: for ordinances so rested upon, as they will increase people's judgment afterwards, Matt. xi. 22, so they prove a fearful snare in the mean time, in so far as they are usually relied upon for salvation, Phil. iii. 7, and occasion is taken from them to neglect all other duty both to God and man, Jer. vii. 10; for Paul doth here speak of it as a thing disgraceful: "Who are called," saith he, "circumcision in the flesh made with hands."

VER. 12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

The apostle, thirdly, doth here branch forth their misery at that time when they were unconverted Gentiles, in five particulars. First, they were "without Christ," as being not only without all saving and real interest in Christ, which was common to them with all the unregenerate, whether without or within the visible church, Gal. v. 2, but also without an offer of Christ in the ministry of the gospel, as they were Gentiles, without the bounds of the visible church, Psa. cxlvii. 20. Secondly, they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," having no union or communion, neither with the invisible church of true believers, which was common to them with all the unregenerate, Rom. ii. 28, nor yet with the visible church of professors, which was in those times among the people of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 8. And this latter alienation was peculiar to them, as they were unchurched Gentiles, Psa. lxxvi. 1. Thirdly, they were "strangers to the covenants of promise," that is, the covenant of grace made with Adam after the fall, Gen. iii. 15, and afterwards frequently renewed with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7; Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 3; Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 13, 14; with Israel upon Mount Sinai, Exod. xxiv. 7, and in the plains of Moab, Deut. xxxi. 1, &c.; and with David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. And therefore it is called "covenants," in the plural number, though it was always one and the same covenant in substance; the substantial sum thereof being always comprised in that one

comprehensive and fountain promise, Gen. iii. 15, or Gen. xii. 3, which seemeth to be here pointed at by the word "promise" in the singular number; of which promise all the following promises made to Abraham, David, and the rest, were but branches, or more full explanations. Now they are said to have been strangers to this covenant, not only because they had no actual interest in the saving blessings of remission of sins, grace here and glory hereafter, which were promised in that covenant, Gal. iii. 8, (and this was common to them with all the unregenerate, Psa. l. 16, 17;) but also they had not so much as this covenant revealed unto them; neither that it was, nor of what kind, or upon what conditions it was; neither had they an offer of it by the public ministry of the word, and so were not within the very outward bond of it, neither had any right to the external privileges of this covenant, Deut. iv. 7, 8; which estrangement was peculiar unto them, as they were unchurched Gentiles, Deut. xxix. 10 — 12. Fourthly, they were "without hope," not only without that saving grace of hope which floweth from faith laying hold upon the covenant of promise, Rom. xv. 13, and sustaineth the heart in the patient and well-grounded expectation of the thing promised and believed, 1 Thess. v. 8; and this was also common to them with all the unregenerate, Job viii. 13, 14; but also they were in a condition so hopeless, that their salvation was not in an ordinary way possible, as being wholly destitute of those means whereby God doth ordinarily convert and save sinners, Psa. cxlvii. 20; and this was peculiar unto them, as they were unchurched Gentiles, Rom. ix. 4. Fifthly, they were "without God," or atheists; not as if they had been deprived of all sense of a Deity, (for they worshipped false gods, Acts xiv. 12, 13,) nor yet as if they had been without the reach and care of God's overruling and all-upholding providence, Acts xvii. 28; but they were without the knowledge of the true God, Gal. iv. 8; or though they had some confused knowledge even of the true God, Rom. i. 19, yet he was not their reconciled God in Christ, Col. i. 21; neither did they give him that worship and glory which is due unto God, and was prescribed by him in his word, Rom. i. 21, 22. And lastly, he addeth, that they were without God "in the world:" which words, "in the world," may be looked upon as a general clause relating to all the particular branches of their misery before mentioned. And he seemeth hereby to condescend what that bypast time was, wherein all that he hath spoken was verified in them; to wit, when they were in the world, that is, without the church; as the world is frequently taken in opposition to God's church, John xv. 19, and xvii. 14, and especially to the truly regenerate in the church, 1 John v. 19.

DOCTRINES.

1. As those who are converted would frequently call to mind that sin and misery under which they were when God did call them, (see ver. 11, Doct. 2.) so because an abstract view of sin and misery in the general doth not much affect the heart, therefore they ought to branch forth, and call to mind their misery in its several heads and

parcels, that so they may be the more affected with it; for the apostle, having exhorted them to remember their former misery, he doth not only give them a general view of it, ver. 11, but here doth branch it forth in five particulars, which they were to remember: "That at that time ye were without Christ," &c.

2. For a man to be without an offer of Christ, yea to be without a real interest in Christ, though there be never so frequent offers of him, is a doleful, sad, and dangerous case; for to want a real and saving interest in Christ, is to want life, 1 John v. 12; light, John i. 4, 5; strength, John xv. 5; liberty, John viii. 36; and acceptance with God, Matt. iii. 17: and to have a saving interest in Christ doth make a man truly happy, whatever be his misery otherwise: for he maketh this the first branch of their misery, and that which virtually compriseth all the rest, even that "at that time they were without Christ."

3. Though Christ from all eternity had a right unto and interest in the elect, they being given over unto him in the covenant of redemption, John vi. 39, yet they never have nor can plead any interest in him, or in those saving benefits which were purchased by him, until they be effectually called, and do actually believe in him; for though God from all eternity had chosen in Christ those who were truly godly among the Ephesians, chap. i. 4, yet until their effectual calling, they were without Christ, as "without Christ" did speak their not having an actual interest in him; "That at that time ye were without Christ."

4. Though Jesus Christ was not so clearly manifested unto the Jewish church as he now is under the gospel, 2 Cor. iii. 14, yet they were not then altogether without Christ; they had him revealed unto them, though but darkly, in the word, Gen. xii. 3, and in their daily sacrifices, which were types and shadows of him, Col. ii. 17; yea, and the godly then had real interest by faith in him, John viii. 56, and in those saving benefits which then were to be, and now are actually purchased by him, Rom. iii. 25; for the Gentiles are here said, in opposition to the Jews, to have been "at that time without Christ;" whereby it is implied that the Jewish church was not without him.

5. It is no small happiness for men and women to have union and communion with the church of Christ. It is even an happiness in its own kind, and comparatively, to be members of his visible church; for thereby we partake of all the privileges thereof, which are, God's special care and government, Isa. iv. 5, 6, protection, and preservation, in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies, Isa. xxxi. 4, 5; the enjoyment of the ordinary means of salvation, Psal. cxlvii. 19; and the external communion of the saints, by partaking of the same ordinances, 1 Cor. x. 17, and the mutual gifts one of another, 1 Thess. v. 11; together with the offers of Christ and salvation upon such terms as they are proposed in the gospel, Acts xiii. 38. But it is much more happiness to be members of the invisible church of believers; for thereby we do partake of all the saving benefits and special privileges thereof, which are, union with Christ, as her

head and husband, Eph. v. 23, 30; communion with him in all the saving fruits of his redemption, relating either to grace here, or glory hereafter, chap. i. 3; together with that communion which believers have among themselves, in their mutual partaking of the gifts and graces one of another, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. And to be deprived of all union and communion with Christ's church is a woful, sad, and miserable case: for Paul maketh this the second branch of their misery, that they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel."

6. So strait and nigh is that union betwixt Christ and his church, that separation from, or union with the one, inferreth separation from, or union with the other; and in the same respect and degree wherein men are separated from, or united with Christ, they are in some answerable respect and degree separated from, or united with his church: for the apostle conjoineth these two, as of equal extent; "Ye were without Christ, as being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel."

7. As the Lord hath been graciously pleased to transact with man about that obedience which he oweth unto God as his sovereign Lord and Creator, in the way of covenant or mutual paction and agreement; wherein for his better encouragement to discharge the duty required of him, the Lord doth assure him of a rich reward, John iii. 16; so the covenant which God hath entered with fallen man, is a covenant of promise, wherein the thing promised is freely given, and not for any worth in him to whom it is given: for, as his affirming that the Gentiles were strangers to the covenants of promise, implieth that the church was no stranger to the covenant, but that God did deal with them by way of covenant; so the word "promise" in the original signifieth a free promise, where the thing promised is freely bestowed; "And strangers from the covenants of promise."

8. For men to live and die without an offer of the covenant of grace made unto them to be entered by them, is a woful, sad, and dangerous case; for hereby they are not only deprived of all the privileges of the visible church, mentioned Doct. 5, to which the tender of this gracious covenant unto a people, and their professed subjection to it, doth give right; (the covenant being the church's charter whereby she holdeth all these privileges, Acts ii. 38, with 39;) but their salvation in that case is also rendered in an ordinary way impossible, there being not so much as an offer of it, nor a making known unto them the terms and conditions whereupon salvation may be had. Yea, and further, to be without an actual interest and right to the saving blessings of that gracious covenant, arising from the grace of saving faith, laying hold upon those blessings, and the offer of them in the covenant, is a case in some respects no less lamentable, sad, and dangerous; (which is the case of all who are unregenerate, even though they be members of the visible church, and so within the outward bond of the covenant, and do enjoy the common blessings thereof, Rom. ix. 4, Matt. xx. 16;) for such are not only destitute of any claim or title to any of those spiritual blessings which are offered in the rich and precious promises of this covenant, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, and xxxii. 39, 40; but also shall

have no advocate to plead for them, Matt. vii. 23, are bound to fulfil the whole law, else they can never be saved, Gal. v. 3; and have no strength allowed upon them for the fulfilling of it but their own, (for they are without Christ;) must stand and fall at God's tribunal, according to that dreadful and terrible sentence of the covenant of works, Gal. iii. 10; yea, it shall go worse with them in the great day, than with those who never heard the gospel, Matt. xi. 22. So that the case of such is most miserable; for the apostle maketh this the third branch of their misery, even that they "were strangers from the covenants of promise;" without all title or interest either to the outward privileges or saving blessings of that covenantant.

9. As those who are without the offer of Christ in the gospel, without the bounds of the visible church, and the external bond of the covenant of grace, are in a case altogether hopeless; their salvation being in an ordinary way altogether impossible; so all unregenerate men, even those who are within the church, and have no real interest in Christ, or the saving benefits of the covenant of grace, by the grace of faith, and have no union or communion with the invisible church of sound believers, all such are destitute of the true and saving grace of hope for heaven and salvation, and those other good things promised in the word, even that hope which is grounded upon the word, Psa. cxix. 49, and the mercies of God, Psa. cxlvii. 11, and not upon our own performances, Matt. vii. 22, and beareth up the heart under all discouragements, Psa. cxix. 81; yea, and setteth the man who hath it upon the task of purifying his own heart, 1 John iii. 3. All unregenerate men are destitute of this hope, whatever false hopes, blind confidence, and daring presumption they may entertain in their hearts, Deut. xxix. 19; for the apostle, having affirmed of those Ephesians, that at that time they were without Christ, &c., he addeth, they were also "without hope," that is, their salvation was in an ordinary way hopeless, to wit, as they were without the offer of Christ, and the doctrine of the covenant, and they were destitute of the grace of hope, as being without actual interest in Christ by faith, &c. and unregenerate; "having no hope."

10. To be wholly destitute of this true and saving grace of hope, is a most woful, dangerous, and lamentable case: for hereby men do live in continual hazard of spiritual shipwreck, being destitute of the anchor of their soul, Heb. vi. 19; hereby they are exposed to deadly blows from sin, Satan, and worldly discouragements, being destitute of their helmet, Eph. vi. 17; hereby they want a necessary spur and incitement to diligence in duties, 1 John iii. 3; yea, and hereby they cannot choose but die either in stupid senselessness, Job xxi. 13, or in desperate diffidence, Gen. iv. 13; for he maketh this the fourth branch of their misery, that they had no hope, which includeth mainly their wanting the grace of hope; "having no hope," saith he.

11. There is no knowledge of God, as we ought, or enjoying of him, except we know him in Christ, and come to him by Christ: for the apostle maketh their being without Christ, and

their being without God, to go together; "And without God in the world," saith he.

12. As not only profane avowed atheists are without God, but those also who do not know the true God, and give not to him that trust, love, fear, and joy, above what they give unto any other thing else, and who do not labour to have him made their own God; so to be thus without God, is a woful, sad, and lamentable case, even the headstone of all that misery which any creature can be under: for hereby God remaineth their enemy, Col. i. 21; all the creatures are against them, Hos. ii. 18, and they themselves are under the drop of God's eternal wrath and vengeance; (see ver. 2;) for the apostle affirmeth here of those Ephesians, that before their conversion they were without God, though even then they had some knowledge of the true God, Rom. i. 19; and he mentioneth this in the last place, as the sum and headstone of all their misery, even "that they were without God in the world."

VER. 13. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Here beginneth the second branch of the second part of the chapter, wherein is set forth the present happy estate of those Ephesians, together with the way how, and by whom, this happy lot was purchased for them. And, first, he briefly propoundeth that blessed change which had befallen them, in so far as they who were before "afar off," to wit, from Christ, his church, his covenant, saving hope, and from God himself, not through local distance, Acts xvii. 27, but through want of saving interest, union, and communion with God, with Christ and his church, by faith, hope, love, or professed subjection to God's law and ordinances, as was explained ver. 12, they, even they, were now made nigh to God, to Christ and his church, in the same sense. And withal he briefly sheweth, not only the way how all things requisite to that blessed change were purchased for them, to wit, by the merit of Christ's death upon the cross, which was the accomplishment of all his other sufferings and obedience, John xix. 30, but also, how those things so purchased were actually bestowed upon them, and applied unto them, to wit, by their being in Christ, and by virtue of their union with him.

Now, as their distance, and several pieces of their former misery, did belong unto them in two respects; first, as they were without the visible church; secondly, as they were men unregenerate, in which respect their misery was common to them with all the unregenerate, whether without or within the church, as was cleared, ver. 12; so what is here, and in the verses following, spoken of their delivery, and present happy state, is in many things, at least, applicable, not only to their inward state, as being a great many of them truly regenerate, justified, and sanctified, and therefore members of the invisible church of believers; but also by proportion to their outward state, as being members of Christ's visible church, whereby they enjoyed many rich privi-

leges, (see ver. 12, Doct. 5.) And those also purchased by Christ, Eph. iv. 8—11, and conveyed to the visible church, and every church member by reason of their visible and political union with him, John xv. 2; neither is Scripture hereby rendered ambiguous or doubtful, as signifying two diverse things; for, whether we look to the privileges of true believers, or of visible church-members, (the privileges of the latter being the enjoyment of those blessings in the offer of the gospel, and a living under such means and ordinances by which God useth to convey those blessings, the actual possessing of which, or present right unto which, are the privileges of real believers,) or if we look to that which giveth them a right, each one to their respective privileges, to wit, the grace of faith, and a mystical and saving union with Christ upon the part of real believers, and a profession of the doctrine of faith, either personally or parentally, and an external and political union with Christ upon the part of visible church-members: I say, which of those be looked unto, we will find so much of likeness and proportion betwixt what belongeth to the visible church, and what belongeth to the invisible, that both may safely and without ambiguity be taken up as intended by the Spirit of God to be expressed in one and the same scripture; though the one more principally, and the other secondarily, and as it were by proportion. As for example here, seeing the nighness and happiness, which visible church-members enjoy, is only comparative, and with respect had to the greater misery of those who are wholly without the church; and that it is but a misery and distance, being compared with that state of nighness and happiness which the truly regenerate are brought unto; therefore I conceive, that what is mentioned of the delivery and blessed state, here spoken of, was verified mainly and fully in the regenerate and visible church of believers among them, and but proportionally only and in part in the visible church of professors: and therefore I shall only collect such doctrines as arise from it, being so considered.

Hence, learn, 1. The more nigh the consideration of our miserable and happy state be set together in opposition the one to the other before the eye of the soul, it commendeth and sweeteneth our happy state through grace the more: for the apostle's scope being to set forth the happiness of that state wherein free grace had placed them, he compriseth all their misery in one word, "they were sometimes far off," and all their happiness in another, "they were now made nigh;" and so giveth a joint view of them both at once.

2. The people of God are not so to remember bypast sin and misery, as to make them question the fruits of God's mercy already received, or to despair of receiving more in time to come: for having exhorted them (ver. 11) to remember their former misery, in the first place, he exhorteth them here to remember that happy estate wherein mercy had placed them in the next; "But now—ye are made nigh."

3. As it is the duty of converts frequently to remember their former sin and misery, (see ver. 11, Doct. 2;) so also to call to mind, and confi-

dently avow, that gracious change which free grace hath wrought upon them in their conversion; because as misbelief is ready to call it in question, Isa. l. 10, so the remembrance and avowing of it is most profitable, in order to our own comfort against the sense of bypast or present sin and misery, 1 Cor. vi. 11, in order to our incitement to the duty of walking suitably, chap. iv. 1, and to our encouragement against the fear of all imaginary difficulties, which may occur in our way to heaven and glory, Phil. i. 6, and in order to our thankfulness unto God for his so rich mercy manifested in our delivery, 1 Pet. ii. 9; for the apostle exhorteth them to remember this in the second place, "That ye who were sometimes far off are now made nigh."

4. As converting grace falleth often upon those who are most graceless, and at greatest distance from God, from Christ and his church; so it bringeth those upon whom it falleth into a state of nearness to all those, because of these many nigh relations, under which they stand to God; as of servants, Rom. vi. 22; of friends, Col. i. 21; and sons, John i. 12; and to Christ, as of his spouse, Cant. iv. 8; members, Eph. v. 30; brethren, &c. Heb. ii. 11. And because of these sweet influences for the life and comfort of grace, which they receive daily from him, as the members from the head, Col. ii. 19; because of that near access which they have unto God in Christ, both as to their state and performances; wherof ver. 19; and because of that union, and communion, which they have with the invisible church of believers, the congregation of the first-born, (see ver. 12, Doct. 5;) for with relation mainly to this gracious change, which was wrought upon real believers among them in their regeneration, he saith, "But now, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh."

5. As this excellent state of nearness to God and his church, wherein the truly regenerate do stand, and all those excellent privileges which flow from it, were purchased for the elect by no less price than the blood of Christ, whose blood was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28, and therefore of infinite value; so none of those are actually bestowed upon and applied unto the elect, until they be united to Christ, and in him, by saving faith, as the branches are in the root, from which they draw sap and nourishment: for saith he, "in Christ Jesus ye are made nigh by the blood of Christ;" they were in Christ by faith, before they attained that state of nearness which was purchased by his blood.

VER. 14. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*—

The apostle being, next, more largely to explain and prove what he hath briefly asserted, that the Gentiles were made more nigh to God and his church by the blood of Christ, doth, first, confirm it by an argument taken from Christ's priestly office, according to which he is not only

the Mediator for peace, and peacemaker betwixt God and man, and among men themselves; but he is also "our peace," as being the propitiatory sacrifice, and having purchased this peace with his own blood, Isa. liii. 5, and so the very cause and reason of this peace is in himself, and nothing extrinsical to himself. Secondly, he doth prove that Christ was their peace, by the effect produced by him, and the matter of working this effect. The effect itself is, that where before the Jews and Gentiles were irrecoverably separated by reason of their different religion and religious rites, he had now united them in one and the same church, which is said to have been then done, because it was in part done: for the rejecting of "Israel," is only in part, Rom. xi. 25, but the full accomplishment of it shall be when all "Israel," and the fulness of the Gentiles, shall be called, Rom. xi. 25, 26. The manner of working this effect, is set down in three phrases, all signifying one thing, though different in regard of diverse considerations. First, "He broke down the middle wall of partition," whereby, as he explaineth himself in the following verse, is meant the ceremonial law, and it is called the "middle wall of partition," or of a hedge and stone-wall, (for the original signifieth both,) with an eye, questionless, to the wall which was in Solomon's temple between the court of the people and of the Gentiles, which hindered all manner of passage, sight, or communication betwixt them, Ezek. xlii. 20; so the meaning is, that in order to this union he did abolish the legal ceremonies, whereby the Jews were distinguished from the Gentiles, as two houses, by a mid-wall going betwixt them, or as an inclosed garden is separated from an out-field, by a hedge or dyke of rough stones, ver. 14. Secondly, he did "abolish the enmity:" by which "enmity" is meant the same ceremonial law, and that chiefly because it was the occasion of a perpetual standing strife betwixt Jew and Gentile; while the Jew reproached the Gentile with uncircumcision and neglect of God's worship, Acts x. 28, the Gentile, again, reproached the Jew with circumcision, and the rest of these legal rites, which they judged unreasonable, irreligious, and absurd, Esther iii. 8; although those ceremonial rites may be also called "enmity," with relation to God, in so far as the practising of them by the Jews was a real testimony and confession of their own guilt, and the enmity which was betwixt them and God, see Col. ii. 14; and his withholding them from the Gentiles was an evidence of his displeasure and enmity against them, Ps. cxlvii. 20. And here the apostle expresseth the way how Christ did abolish that enmity, or these ceremonial rites; to wit, in "his own flesh," that is, by his death, which he suffered in his flesh, or human nature, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Thirdly, he expoundeth what he meant by the "mid-wall" and the "enmity" which Christ abolished, even "the law of commandments in ordinances." The first of which words is more general, to wit, "the law," as comprehending, according to the custom of the Hebrew language, all doctrine revealed to the church, Ps. xix. 7; and this is restricted by the second word, which is more special, to wit, "commandments," signifying that doctrine only which

commandeth what should be done, and forbiddeth what should not be done: and both those are restricted by the third, which is yet more special: to wit, "ordinances;" whereby are meant those commandments only which did relate to God's external worship, and were prescribed by God, as so many types and shadows of Christ to come, and of those good things which were purchased by him, Heb. ix. 9, 10. So that the law and commandments were only abolished as to that part of them which was contained in those ordinances, ver. 15.

From ver. 14, learn, 1. Every man by nature, in himself, and without Christ, is at war and enmity with God, with his church, and chiefly those in the church who are truly regenerate; he cannot be subject unto the law of God, Rom. viii. 7; and as, therefore, he hateth the lawgiver, and those who yield obedience to his laws, so he is under the lawgiver's curse, Gal. iii. 10; for, while the apostle speaketh of making those Ephesians nigh to God and his church by Christ, he saith, "Christ was their peace;" which implieth that their distance from those consisted in hatred of, and enmity against them; "for he is our peace," saith he.

2. This enmity, chiefly which is between God and fallen man, was irreconcilable, and impossible to be removed, except Jesus Christ, that great High Priest and Prince of Peace, had shed his blood and suffered death, by the merit whereof as he hath given satisfaction to a provoked God, Eph. v. 2, so by the efficacy and virtue thereof he subdueth that rebellious disposition against God which naturally is in us, Rom. vi. 6, and maketh us accept the offer of friendship and reconciliation with God, and yield ourselves servants to righteousness unto holiness, Acts v. 31; and so upon both hands he maketh peace: for, saith he, "he is our peace," to wit, "by his blood," spoken of in the preceding verse.

3. The uniting of both Jew and Gentile in one church is a branch of that peace which Christ hath purchased with his blood; and that not only because their actual union was, according as God in his wise counsel had decreed, to follow upon Christ's death, and not to go before it, (see upon Gal. iii. ver. 14, Doct. 4,) but also in order to this union, the law of ceremonies behoved to be abolished, see Doct. 5, and this called for Christ's death, see ver. 15, Doct. 4; for the apostle having asserted that Christ was their peace by his blood, he giveth this as an instance or effect of his so being, "Who hath made both one."

4. From the apostle's designing the ceremonial law by a metaphor taken from houses divided by a mid-wall, or from an orchard, garden, or inclosure, separated from the out-field by a dyke or wall of rough stones; we learn several things relating to the nature, use, and duration of the ceremonial law, which are the grounds of the similitude. And first, as a wall is built by the owner of the inclosure, so the ceremonial law was of God's own appointment, who only had power to choose what part of the world he thought fit to be an inclosure for himself, Deut. xxxii. 8, and to appoint these means and ordinances, whereby he would have them enclosed and separated from others, Exod. xxv. 40. Secondly, as a rough wall

is made up of so many hard, unpolished stones, not covered over with lime or plaster; so the ceremonial law consisted of many ordinances, Heb. ix. 10, and those very difficult to be obeyed, and an intolerable yoke, Acts xv. 10. Thirdly, as a wall or hedge encloseth a piece of ground for the owner's special use, (which therefore is more painfully manured,) and separateth that enclosure from the out-field which lieth about it; so the ceremonial law did serve to enclose the people of Israel, as the Lord's own garden and vineyard, for bringing forth fruit unto himself, Isa. v. 7, and to separate them from all the world besides, Deut. iv. 7, 8, as being a worship wholly different from and contrary unto the superstitious rites and worship used among the Gentiles, Deut. xii. 2, and containing strict injunctions unto the Jews to avoid all conformity with the Gentiles in their garments, Num. xv. 38, cutting of their hair, Lev. xix. 27, and such like. Fourthly, as a rough wall is but weak and ruinous, as not being built with cement or mortar to make it strong, and therefore but to endure for a season, until the owner think fit to enlarge his enclosure and take in more of the open field; so the ceremonial law was not to last for ever, but only for a time, until Christ should come in the flesh, and take in the Gentiles within the enclosure of his church, who were before an open field, not possessed nor manured by him; after which there was no further use of the mid-wall: "And hath broken down the mid-wall of partition between us," saith he; meaning the ceremonial law.

5. So long as the ceremonial law did stand in force and vigour, the Jews and Gentiles could not be united into one church: for seeing by that law the chief parts of God's worship were restricted to the temple at Jerusalem; therefore, though scattered proselytes of the neighbouring nations did join themselves to the church of the Jews, and in some measure observed the way of worship then enjoined, Acts viii. 27, yet there was a physical impossibility for the generality of many nations far remote from Jerusalem to have served God according to the prescript of worship which then was: besides, there was such an habituate and as it were a natural antipathy transmitted from one generation unto another among the Gentiles against the ceremonial worship, that there was little less than a moral impossibility of bringing up the body of the Gentiles unto a cordial joining with the Jews in it: for the apostle sheweth the ceremonial law behoved to be abrogated, in order to a union betwixt these two, while he saith, "Who hath made both one, and broken down the middle-wall of partition between us."

6. Whoever would make peace betwixt God and himself, or betwixt himself and others, he ought seriously to think upon those things which stand in the way of peace, and set about the removal of them, if it be in his power, and chiefly those evils in himself, of pride, vain-glory, self-seeking, and a contentious disposition, which are great obstructions in the way of peace, Phil. ii. 3, 4; else, whatever be his pretences for peace, he is no real follower of it: for, Christ intending to make peace betwixt Jew and Gentile, did take away whatever might have impeded it; he even

"broke down the middle-wall of partition between them."

From ver. 15, learn, 1. As God's people in covenant with him, ought to be highly incensed against and averse from any voluntary entire fellowship with those who neglect and contemn the ordinances of worship prescribed by God in his word; so those who are without the church, yea and all unregenerate men, do look upon the ordinances of God's worship as base, ridiculous, and contemptible, and carry a kind of hatred and disdain to all such as make conscience of them: for so the ancient worship, prescribed in the ceremonial law, was the occasion of hatred and enmity betwixt the Gentile, who contemned it, and the Jew, who made conscience of it. And therefore is here called the "enmity;" "having abolished the enmity."

2. As the moral law, contained in the Ten Commandments, was no part of that mid-wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, seeing some of the drafts and lineaments of that law are upon the hearts of all by nature, Rom. ii. 15; so there was no necessity to abrogate this law at Christ's death, in order to the uniting of Jew and Gentile, neither was it at all abolished; for the law abolished was the law, not simply, but "the law of commandments," and these not all, but such commandments as were "contained in ordinances," to wit, the ceremonial law, as we show in the exposition; "even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," saith he.

3. As God only hath power and liberty to prescribe what manner of worship he will be served by, so he did once give a most observable evidence of this his power and liberty, by changing that external way of worship which was prescribed by himself, under the Old Testament, unto another under the New; although the internals of his worship, to wit, the graces of faith, love, hope, joy in God, do remain the same in both, Matt. xxii. 37, 39; for he "did abolish the law of commandments contained in ordinances," even all the ancient worship consisting in rites and ceremonies, sensible and fleshly observations, which God did then prescribe, not as simply delighted in them, but as accommodating himself to the childish condition of the church in those times; and hath now appointed a more spiritual way of worship, as more suitable to the grown age of the church, John iv. 21, 23. See further the reasons why the ceremonial law was abolished, and concerning that state of indifferency wherein the practice of it was left for a time, upon Gal. ii. 3, Doct. 2, and ver. 4, Doct. 1.

4. It was Christ's sufferings and death, which put an end to the law of ceremonies, and made the binding power thereof to cease; for seeing his sufferings were the body and substance of all those shadows, they neither did nor could vanish until Christ had suffered, but then they did; it being impossible that a shadow, and the body, whereof it is a shadow, can consist in one and the same place; "Having abolished in his flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

VER. 15. For to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby :

The apostle, thirdly, for further clearing of what he spoke, ver. 13, that the Gentiles were made nigh to God and his church in the blood of Christ, holdeth forth two ends, which Christ proposed to be brought about in his abolishing the ceremonial law. First, that he might, by a manner of new creation, make of those two nations, of Jew and Gentile, being firmly united to himself as to their head, one people and church, here called "one new man," to show the intimacy of that union, as also the way how they were united, not by bringing any one of them to the fashions and customs of the other, for so they should have been made "one old man," but by bringing both off that way of worship whereon they were; the Gentile, both from the substance and external manner of their worship, as having been wholly idolatrous, Gal. iv. 8; the Jew, only from the external manner of their worship, consisting in fleshly and sensible rites and observations, whereby he made them one new church, with new ordinances of divine worship, even such as the church now enjoyeth under the gospel; and so he concludeth the verse by showing that Christ did hereby accomplish what he had spoken of him, ver. 13 and 14, even that he had made peace betwixt the two nations, and consequently the Gentiles nigh to the church by his own blood; this is ver. 15. The second end why Christ did abolish the ceremonial law, was, that he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile, being so united among themselves in one body, unto a provoked God; which he did by the sacrifice of his own soul and body upon the cross, by the means whereof he did destroy that enmity which was betwixt God and man, as well the sin of the elect both in its guilt, Rom. viii. 1, and power, Rom. vi. 6, which was the ground and cause of that enmity, Isa. lix. 2, as the ceremonial law, which was an evidence of it; see upon ver. 15. This is the sum of ver. 16.

From ver. 15, learn, 1. Union in the church of Christ is a thing which ought to be prized by us highly, and sought after earnestly; and so much, as there is nothing in our power which we ought not to bestow upon it, and dispense with for the acquiring and maintaining of it; for so much was it prized by Christ, that he gave his own life to procure it, and did beat down all his own ordinances which stood in the way of it; "He even abolished in his flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make of twain one new man."

2. There are no divisions more hardly curable, than those which are about the religion and worship of God, in so far as they engage not only the credit, but also the consciences of the divided parties; hence one party, so engaged, doth pursue what they maintain, as that wherein God's honour and their own salvation are most nearly concerned, and doth look upon the other party as an adversary, in so far at least, to both of those; for the apostle, speaking of Christ's uniting the Jew and Gentile in one church and religion, maketh use of a word which sheweth

this was a task of no small difficulty, even such, that no less than creating power was required to it, while he saith, "for to make in himself (the word signifieth 'to create in himself') of twain one new man."

3. So strict and near is that conjunction and union which is especially among true believers in the church, that all of them, how far soever dispersed through the world, do yet make up but one man and one body; as being all, whatever be their other differences, most strictly united, as members unto one head, Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 27, and animated, as to the inward man, by the same Spirit of God residing and acting in them, Rom. viii. 9; for the apostle sheweth that all of them, whether Jew or Gentile, were made, not only one people, one nation, one family, but one new man; "For to make of twain one new man."

4. As the essential unity of the invisible church, without which the church could not be a church, doth of necessity depend upon and flow from that union which every particular member hath with Christ, as head, seeing the grace of love (whereby they are knit one to another, Col. iii. 14) doth flow from faith, Gal. v. 6, whereby they are united to him, Eph. iii. 17, so the more our union with Christ is improved unto the keeping of constant communion and fellowship with him, the more will be attained unto of harmonious walking among ourselves, suitable unto that essential union which is in the church of Christ; for the apostle maketh the conjunction of Jews and Gentiles in one church to depend upon Christ's uniting of them to himself; "For to make in himself of twain one new man," saith he.

5. The peace which ought to be, and which Christ calleth for in his church, is not a simple cessation from open strife, which may take place even when there remaineth a root of bitterness in peoples' spirits, Psa. lv. 21; but it is such an harmonious walking together in all things as floweth from the nearest conjunction of hearts, and the total removal of all former bitterness of spirits; for the peace which Christ did make betwixt Jew and Gentile did follow upon his abolishing the enmity, and making them one man; "so making peace," saith he.

From ver. 16, learn, 1. Union and peace with men, even with good men, is to little purpose, except there be peace and friendship with God also; for the apostle sheweth that Christ, in abolishing the ceremonial law, did design not only the conjunction of the church among themselves, but their reconciliation with God also, and the former in subordination to the latter; "And that he might reconcile both unto God, in one body."

2. As all mankind have fallen from that state of friendship with God wherein they once were before the fall, Eccles. vii. 29, so the repairing of this woful breach, and making up of friendship betwixt God and the elect, was Christ's great business in the world, for effectuating whereof, whatever he did or suffered was in some one way or other subservient; for the apostle sheweth he suffered in the flesh, abolished the ceremonial law, united the two nations,

"that he might reconcile both unto God in one body." The word rendered "reconcile," signifies the making up of old friendship.

3. Though the believing Jews under the Old Testament, were reconciled unto God, even while the ceremonial law stood in force, Psa. xxxii. 4, yet the price by virtue whereof they were reconciled, could not be actually paid, to wit, Christ's death and sufferings, except the ceremonial law had presently vanished, see ver. 15, Doct. 4; neither could Jew and Gentile be united together in one body, and so reconciled to God, while that law was in force and binding, see ver. 14, Doct. 5. Therefore, and in those respects, it was necessary for Christ to abolish the ceremonial law, that he might reconcile both Jew and Gentile unto God; for so saith Paul, "He abolished the law of commandments in ordinances, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body."

4. There can be no reconciliation betwixt God and us, except we be united by faith to Christ, and to the body of all believers in him, so that none can be one with God who are not of the mystical body of his church; yea, and in so far will the sense and sweet effects of reconciliation with God be interrupted and obstructed, as persons reconciled do give way unto divisions, rents, and strifes among themselves; for the Gentiles and Jews being in one body with Christ and his church, come to be reconciled unto God; "That he might reconcile both unto God, in one body," that is, being united among themselves in one body under Christ the head, as is affirmed ver. 15.

5. As Jesus Christ did interpose as mediator and peacemaker to reconcile God and us, so he behaved, in order unto this end, to bear the chastisement of our peace, and to lay down his life by a shameful, painful, and cursed death, that so the justice of God being fully satisfied for our wrong, we might enjoy God's peace and favour with life; for he sheweth the mean of their reconciliation was the cross of Christ, not the material tree or matter of the cross, but Christ's sufferings and death upon the cross; "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross."

6. Christ, in suffering himself to be overcome by death, did fully destroy sin, death, the ceremonial law, and every other thing which could impede the reconciliation of the elect with God, he having thereby brought in the substance of all those legal shadows, Col. iii. 17, satisfied the justice of God, and purchased grace and strength, which afterwards he was to convey unto all believers for mortifying and subduing the body of sin and death in them, Acts v. 31; for, saith Paul, "He hath slain the enmity thereby," that is, by the cross, and his death upon the cross; so that by being slain, he slew the enmity betwixt God and us.

VER. 17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

In this and the following verse is contained

the third branch of the second part of the chapter, wherein the apostle sheweth how that excellent benefit of union and communion with God and his church, purchased by Christ for the Gentiles, was published, and actually communicated unto them equally with the Jews, to wit, by the preaching of the gospel. And, first, he declareth that Christ himself did preach and publish the glad tidings of that peace and reconciliation which was purchased by him on the cross; see ver. 15, 16. And, secondly, he sheweth to whom he did publish it first, to the Gentiles who were far off, Acts ii. 39, being compared with the Jews, as being without the bounds of the visible church. Now Christ preached to the Gentiles, not immediately and in his own person, Matt. xv. 24, except to some few, who were first-fruits of the rest, Matt. viii. 5, &c. and xv. 28, but mediately and by the ministry of his apostles and their successors, the ministers of the gospel, whom he sent unto them to preach, Matt. xxviii. 19, whose ministry he doth always accompany by his Spirit, to the conviction of some and conversion of others; and therefore he himself is said to preach in them, 1 Pet. iii. 19. Next, to the Jews, who are said here to be nigh, because they were within the visible church, and therefore (though many of them, being simply considered, were far from God, yet) they were nigh, being compared with the Gentiles, as living under the drop of the means of grace and reconciliation. Now he mentioneth the Gentiles, first, not as if the gospel had been first preached unto them, Acts xiii. 46, but to show that this privilege of having the gospel preached, did now, under the New Testament, belong equally both to the Jews and Gentiles; and therefore it was not of any moment which of them were mentioned first, and which last.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not sufficient, in order to our reconciliation with God, that a price was paid by Christ upon the cross to satisfy divine justice, but there must also an offer be made of this purchased friendship in the preaching of the gospel, that so we may embrace and lay hold upon it by faith, otherwise the friendship is not actually made, Col. i. 21; for the apostle having showed, ver. 16, that Christ had satisfied divine justice upon the cross, doth here declare how his so doing was published and actually communicated both to Jew and Gentile; "And came, and preached peace."

2. Though we did commit the wrong which occasioned the enmity betwixt God and us, Col. i. 21, yet not only the first motion, but the full prosecution and thorough completing of the friendship, cometh from God through Christ, in so far as Christ did not only upon the cross satisfy for our wrong, but also maketh an offer of friendship so purchased, in the ministry of the word, yea, and bringeth us to a closing with the terms upon which it is offered, John vi. 44; "And came and preached peace."

3. As the sum of the gospel is "peace," there being nothing contained in it but a declaration that peace and reconciliation with God and his church may be had, and upon what sweet and

easy terms it may be had, Rom. v. 11, and earnest offers of that peace made unto all who would embrace it upon those terms, 2 Cor. v. 20, together with the duties of thankfulness, which God doth call for from those who accept the offer, Matt. xi. 29, and the fearful judgments which do await on such who will not embrace the offered friendship, Heb. ii. 3; so the publishing of this doctrine of peace is the gladdest tidings which ever sounded in the ears of lost sinners; for the apostle, speaking of Christ's preaching of the gospel, saith, "He came and preached peace:" the word rendered "preached," doth signify (and accordingly is translated, Rom. x. 15,) "to bring glad tidings."

4. When Christ doth send his called ministers with an offer of peace and reconciliation unto a people, it is all one as if he himself, in his own person, did come and make an offer of him; and therefore the word of reconciliation in their mouth should be received and accepted by those unto whom it is offered, with the same readiness, confidence, and reverence, as they would receive it from Christ himself, Gal. iv. 14; for though Christ preached immediately, and in his own person, only to the Jews, Rom. xv. 8, yet the apostle saith he preached also unto the Gentiles, because he sent his apostles and ministers to preach unto them; "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off."

5. They may be nigh to God as to their external and church state, living under the drop of means, and enjoying the privilege of all divine ordinances, who are yet unreconciled to God, and holding up the enmity which is betwixt the Lord and them; for Christ behoved to preach peace, even to those who were nigh, to wit, in the respects presently mentioned, which implieth they were not yet at peace with God; "And to them that were nigh."

6. For whomsoever Christ hath purchased peace upon the cross, to those he maketh an offer of peace and reconciliation in the preaching of the gospel, and therefore he hath not died for all; for the apostle sheweth that, as Christ purchased peace for both Jew and Gentile, ver. 16, so he came and preached peace to both; even "to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

VER. 18. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The apostle, thirdly, proveth that the Gentiles were effectually called, by the preaching of the gospel, to partake of purchased peace and reconciliation equally with the Jews, because they both had equal access and liberty to approach unto God in the practice of all commanded duties, as unto their own reconciled God and Father; for the word rendered "access" hath an allusion to the courts of princes, where petitioners are admitted unto access to their prince, even in the very presence chamber. Concerning which access, he sheweth, first, that it is through Christ, he having removed all those obstructions and impediments which might have marred it. And, secondly, that it is by the one Spirit of God, who doth create, preserve, quicken, and

actuate those graces, in the exercise whereof they obtained access unto God.

DOCTRINES.

1. One main fruit and evidence of reconciliation is access unto God, whereby reconciled souls have not only liberty to approach unto God in the enjoyment of all divine ordinances, (which access is the privilege of all within the visible church, whether they be reconciled or not, Psa. cxlvii. 19,) but also freedom and liberty of spirit to approach unto God in the exercise of all their saving graces, by which they do enjoy communion with God, and especially in the confident, bold, and reverend exercising of their faith, both as to the change of their state in justification, Rom. v. 2, and as to their sanctification and all the duties thereof, Phil. iv. 13, which access to God is chiefly attained in the duties of prayer and praise, as having God for their direct and immediate object. This is that access which in some measure floweth from peace and reconciliation with God, and is an evidence of it; for the apostle proveth that the gospel was effectually preached in order to their peace and reconciliation, because they had access to God; "We both have access to the Father."

2. There can be no access or familiar approaching unto God by sinners, who are not in Jesus Christ, and come not to God through him, seeing God is a consuming fire upon such, Heb. xii. 29, their sins having divided betwixt him and them, Isa. lix. 2, and so closed up all access unto God, until Jesus Christ do apply unto them the merit of his death, whereby he blotteth out their sin, Rom. iii. 25, and bringeth them unto a state of favour with God, and so maketh a patent door for access unto him, Rom. v. 1, 2, and keepeth it always patent by his continued intercession, Heb. vii. 25, which their renewed provocations would otherwise delay, and hourly close and obstruct, 1 John ii. 1; for, saith he, "through him," that is, Christ, "we both have access to the Father."

3. Christ is the only Mediator betwixt God and man, by whom alone we have access and liberty to approach unto God in the exercise of our graces, whether in the duty of prayer, or any other way, and not by the mediation of saints or angels; for, saith he, "through him we have access," or manuduction, "to the Father."

4. This access and approaching unto God, is not local, by passing from one place to another, especially seeing there is no place wherein access to God may not be had, John iv. 21, 23, but it is spiritual, consisting in the motion of the heart towards God, in the exercise of saving and spiritual graces; for so much is implied while this access is ascribed unto the Spirit, as the efficient thereof; "We have an access by the Spirit."

5. It is not sufficient, in order to our access unto God, that obstructions be removed, and a door made patent by Christ's merit and intercession, through which we may enter; but such is partly our impotency, John xv. 5, and partly our averseness from making use of the offered opportunity, Luke xiv. 17, 18. &c., that except the Spirit of God do cause us enter, by creating

spiritual graces in us, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, by actuating and exciting those graces, Cant. iv. 16, and especially by helping our infirmities in prayer, and stirring up a vehement flame of holy and ardent affections, which may serve, as wings, to elevate our spirits to God, Rom. viii. 26; except, I say, the Spirit of the Lord did thus, we could not otherwise have any access unto God; for he saith "through him we have access by one Spirit."

6. As it is one and the self same Spirit of God who breatheth upon the graces of God's people, Cant. iv. 16, and thereby giveth them access unto God, so it concerneth us much, as we would find access and liberty of approaching unto God, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, there being nothing that marreth access to God, and fellowship with him, more than embittered spirits and division of heart among the people of God, 2 Cor. xiii. 11; for therefore doth the apostle mention the one Spirit of God, to show that the Spirit doth unite those among themselves, upon whom this rich blessing of access is bestowed; "We both have access by one Spirit."

7. As there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Spirit, so the enjoying of the Father is the highest happiness which can be attained, and in which the soul doth rest content when it is attained; the Son again is the way by which we come to the Father, and the Spirit our guide which causeth us enter this way, and go along in it; all which is clearly hinted at here; "through him," that is, Christ, "we have access by one Spirit to the Father."

VER. 19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Here beginneth the fourth branch of the second part of this chapter, where, by way of a conclusion drawn from what is said in the six former verses, the apostle setteth forth that excellent and blessed state wherein the Ephesians now were: which, though in some respects, and in some things at least, by proportion it may be applied to the state of the visible church, to wit, in so far as the members thereof had all those privileges here spoken of in their offer, upon the terms held forth in the gospel, and were under the drop of those means which the Lord doth ordinarily bless and make effectual for working a saving interest in, and right unto all those: yea, and had a present actual right to the external part of those privileges; even the visible church being in some respects God's city, household, and temple, at least the suburbs, utter-court, and porch thereof, and having her own answerable privileges, which are in some measure proportional to those of the invisible church; yet, seeing (as was showed formerly upon the exposition of ver. 13) those excellent things, here spoken of, are not fully, and to their outmost perfection, verified in any, but in the invisible church and the truly regenerate, the members thereof; therefore I shall open up the mind of the Spirit of God, as aiming mainly at those, and give the

meaning of those excellent things here mentioned, as they appertain chiefly to such, in the mean time, leaving it unto the judicious reader to gather from what is said, how, and in what respects, they are applicable unto the visible church. And so that we may enter the exposition of the words, the apostle setteth forth their present happy condition, first, negatively, by showing what they were not, neither "strangers nor foreigners," whereby with allusion to those who are not freemen of an incorporation or city, but either "strangers" (that is, such who have neither the freedom of the city, nor a place of habitation in it, but have their residence far from it,) or "foreigners," (that is, such, who though they have their residence in the city, yet are not freemen, but sojourners for a season,) he sheweth that the second branch of their former misery, spoken of ver. 12, which includeth all the rest, (even their being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, deprived of all union and communion, either with the invisible or visible church,) was now removed. Secondly, he setteth forth their present blessed condition positively, under three similitudes, whereof two are in this verse. In the first, he compareth the whole church, and especially the invisible church of true believers, unto a city, and sheweth that those believing Ephesians had a right unto all the privileges and immunities of that city, the chief whereof are freedom from God's curse, Rev. xxii. 3, and a right unto eternal life, Rev. xxii. 5. And this they had equally with all the other citizens and free members of that city; for the chiefest saints were but their "fellow citizens." In the second similitude, he compareth the same church unto an household, or family, and calleth it God's household, affirming that all of those believing Ephesians did belong to this household, so that he doth hereby express a greater degree of nearness to, and communion with, God and his church, which they had attained unto, than was set forth by the former similitude; there being a straiter tie of familiarity and friendship between the members of one family among themselves, and with the master of the house, than is between the members of one city, whether among themselves, or with their magistrates and rulers.

DOCTRINES.

1. So apt are even good men to be exalted above measure with the excellent things of God bestowed upon them, 2 Cor. xii. 7, that it is not safe at any time to think upon those things, except our former misery and vileness be jointly thought upon also, that so we may be kept humble: for the apostle, while he is of purpose to set forth their excellent privileges, doth not obscurely present their former misery unto their view also, by saying, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners," which implieth they were once so.

2. As it is not an easy matter to convince sinners of their lost and miserable estate by nature; so it is no less difficult, when they are once made truly sensible of sin and misery, to convince them thoroughly of these riches which are in God's mercy, and of that blessed estate which they are

brought unto by God's free grace in Christ: for therefore the apostle sheweth it necessary not only to assert there was a gracious change wrought in them, ver. 13, but also in the following verses to shew forth all the causes of this most blessed change, from which he doth here by an undeniable consequence lay down this conclusion: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners."

3. That we may highly prize and think aright of God's mercy in Christ manifested to believers, we would look upon it, both in the privative and positive effects thereof, both in those evils of sin and misery, which he delivereth from, and those saving blessings, whether relating to grace here or glory hereafter, which he doth confer and bestow: for so doth the apostle here set forth the rich effects of God's grace towards those Ephesians, both negatively and positively; "Ye are no more strangers, but fellow citizens."

4. Though believers be strangers in the world, as to their outward condition; some having no certain place of abode, but driven from their own habitations, 1 Pet. i. 1, and all of them being disposed to look upon earth as a strange country, and the contentments thereof as uncertain, perishing, and therefore not their own, Heb. xiii. 14; yet they are not strangers unto, but citizens of that city, not made with hands, even the blessed society of the saints, in which they live, Phil. iii. 26; unto whose privileges they have a right, and shall at last be brought to the full possession of all its outward blessings and immunities in heaven, John xiv. 2, 3; for it is in this respect he saith, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners."

5. The state and privileges of God's church consisting of all true believers, are such as fitly may be represented by some great incorporation or city, which is a society of people joined together under one magistracy, ruled by the same laws, enjoying the same common privileges and immunities, and strongly defended by walls and bulwarks: in like manner all believers are united under Christ, their supreme magistrate and head, Eph. i. 21; living under one common law, the will of God revealed in Scripture, which is also written in their hearts by that one lawgiver, Jer. xxxi. 33, enjoying one and the same common privileges, (not only access to divine ordinances, but) of justification, Rom. viii. 30; adoption, Eph. i. 5; sanctification, Eph. v. 26; peace of conscience, Rom. v. 1; and a right to heaven, the inheritance of the saints, John iii. 16; and all of them having God's special protection, Psal. xci. 1; yea, and salvation for walls and bulwarks, Isa. xxvi. 1, for this similitude, whereby the church is compared to a city, is implied, while it is said, "Ye are fellow citizens with the saints."

6. Though those who are federally holy, and externally saints, (see upon Phil. i. ver. 1, Doct. 5.) are members of this city, as it speaketh a society of visible professors, Psal. xlviii. 8; yet only those who are inherently holy, their natures being renewed, the seeds of saving grace implanted and growing up unto good works, only such, I say, are free members of this city, as it speaketh the society of the church invisible, who

enjoy immunity from God's wrath and curse, with an actual right unto eternal life: for that the saints only are free members of this city, is implied while he saith, "Fellow citizens with the saints."

7. Whatever differences are among believers, as to their worldly condition, Eph. vi. 5—9, their several functions in the church visible, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and their different degrees of gifts and graces, Rom. xii. 6; yet, all of them do enjoy an equal right to all those saving blessings of the covenant of grace, the charter of this incorporation, Isa. lvi. 4, which are of absolute necessity to the life of grace here, or of glory hereafter, Psal. lxxxiv. 11, and without which none can be a free burgess of this city: for he maketh the believing Ephesians "fellow citizens with the saints," even the chiefest of them, as having the same right with them unto all such immunities and privileges.

8. As the whole society of the invisible church chiefly is God's own great household and family in a peculiar manner, and is therefore admitted to a most near and intimate communion with him, such as a man hath with his own domestics, Rev. iii. 20; yea, and is in a special way provided and cared for by him, 1 Tim. v. 8, so, whenever a man is reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus Christ, he becometh a member of this holy and blessed family, and enjoyeth all the privileges thereof, whereof this is one, in which it differeth from other families, that in this household there are no mercenary servants, but all the domestics are sons and heirs, John i. 12, Col. iii. 24; for by the household of God he meaneth the catholic church, affirming that those Ephesians upon their reconciliation with God became members of it; "And of the household of God," saith he.

VER. 20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;

In the third similitude he compareth the church unto an edifice or stately building, and sheweth that those Ephesians were a part of it: which similitude doth hold forth a further degree of nearness to, and communion with God and his church, than the former; in so far as the stones of an edifice are most strictly joined together, both with the foundation and amongst themselves: and herein he doth, doubtless, allude to Solomon's temple, which did prefigure the church of the truly regenerate. And, first, that he may with greater clearness set forth this their happy condition, he doth describe this spiritual, stately, and, in several things, admirable edifice, from four things. First, in this verse, from its foundation, or that which doth support the weight of the building, which he calleth the "foundation of the prophets and apostles;" whereby is not meant, that the prophets and apostles in their own persons are the foundation of the church; for they are built, as lively stones, with the rest of the elect, upon the foundation, Phil. iii. 8, 9; and therefore we must hereby understand the foundation, which was laid by them as wise master builders under God, 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10, to wit, the doctrine of the

prophets and apostles, or rather Jesus Christ the sum and scope of their doctrine, Rom. x. 4, 1 Cor. ii. 2; as the apostle expoundeth himself, 1 Cor. iii. 11, and is clear from Isa. xxviii. 16; to which place he doth here allude, and which is also more plainly set forth in the close of this same verse, where the apostle proveth, that they were built upon that foundation, because Christ is that corner-stone spoken of Isa. xxviii. 16, and Ps. cxviii. 22; so that the foundation and corner-stone must be both one in this place, seeing he inferreth the one from the other, only with this difference, that Christ is not only the lowest corner-stone, which lieth under the whole building, and is a part of the foundation, to which corner-stone he is compared, Isa. xxviii. 16; but he is also the highest, to which he is compared, Ps. cxviii. 22; yea, and such a corner-stone as reacheth all along the angle from the foundation to the top of the building, binding the two walls of the church together, which are the two nations of Jews and Gentiles: for the word in the original signifieth the "extreme corner-stone," that is, both the highest and the lowest, and consequently compriseth all which lie between those two extremes: neither doth the word imply that there are any other subordinate, or secondary foundations, or corner-stones, seeing the word is better rendered "extreme corner" than "chief."

DOCTRINES.

1. Those excellent privileges bestowed upon believers, consisting in and flowing from union and communion with Christ and his church, are of such a spiritual, sublime, and divine nature, and we are so carnal, dull, and slow of understanding, that there are no proper significant words whereby to express them so as we may understand them: for therefore is it that the Spirit of God doth speak of them to us in our own language, and taketh similitudes from things earthly to set them forth, that so we may, at least, understand somewhat of them, as here he maketh use of a similitude taken from a stately building for that end; "And are built upon the foundation."

2. So excellent and full are those privileges, and so complete is that happiness, which is enjoyed by believers, that not any one similitude, taken from earthly things, can fully, or in any measure satisfyingly set them forth: for therefore is it that the Spirit of God doth multiply similitudes to this purpose, that what is wanting in one may be supplied by another; as here, having set forth the happy state of believers from the similitude, first of a city, next of a family, ver. 19, he doth in this verse add a third similitude, taken from an edifice; "And are built upon the foundation," saith he.

3. So steadyable is Jesus Christ unto believers, and of such universal use, in order to their being built up in one temple unto God, that there is not any one piece of a building by which his steadyable usefulness can be sufficiently represented. He is not only the foundation-stone, who, being the first stone which was laid in the building, Rev. xiii. 8, doth support this whole spiritual edifice, Matt. xvi. 18; who was brought so low by his sufferings, and daily in the preaching of

the gospel, that the meanest believer may be rolled upon him, Matt. xi. 28, and upon whom the weights of all believers great and small do hinge, Isa. xxii. 24; but he is also the corner-stone, who reacheth from the foundation to the top of this spiritual edifice, and joineth Jew and Gentile, the two walls of the church, together in one, (see ver. 15.) yea, and all particular believers are united in him, John xvii. 22, 23, who breaketh the violent blasts of all those storms, which would otherwise overthrow the edifice, Isa. xxv. 4, and use to beat most violently upon the corners of buildings, Job i. 19, who also is the choice of the stones of the building, (as corner-stones use to be, Jer. li. 26,) as being of more durable substance, even the great and mighty God, Isa. ix. 6, and is in his human nature adorned and polished with a variety and fulness of created graces above his fellows, Ps. xlv. 7; as corner-stones are more curiously engraven and wrought than the rest of the building, Ps. cix. 12, in whose stability and strength, the strength of the whole spiritual edifice, Matt. xvi. 18, and of every lively stone thereof, doth consist, John x. 28, as the strength of an artificial building consisteth in the goodness of the foundation and corners, Matt. vii. 24, 25; for the apostle, speaking of this spiritual edifice, giveth unto Christ the place both of foundation and corner, while he saith, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief (or extreme) corner-stone."

4. That any man be a part of this spiritual edifice, and do partake of all those glorious privileges which flow from union and communion with God and his church, and are enjoyed by all the lively stones of this building, he must be built upon Christ the foundation, taking band upon him by the cement of lively faith: for the apostle, showing that those Ephesians were a part of this spiritual building, saith they were built on Christ: "And are built upon the foundation."

5. There is no closing with and taking band upon Christ aright as a foundation-stone, or rock for salvation, except he be conceived and accepted of, as he is revealed and offered in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; for he is called the "foundation of the prophets and apostles, to wit," whom they set forth and placed as a foundation in the church by their doctrine and writings.

6. Though God himself be the principal author and builder of this spiritual edifice, Isa. xxviii. 16, 1 Cor. iii. 6, yet he employeth his called ministers and servants as instruments under him for carrying on this work, among whom he did make special use of the prophets and apostles for laying the foundation, in so far as they first did reveal and preach Jesus Christ, and commit to writing such truths concerning him as are necessary for salvation, John xx. 31, while other ordinary ministers are employed in the preaching of Jesus Christ, as he is revealed in Scripture, to build up the elect upon the foundation which was laid by them, 2 Tim. ii. 2; for he calleth Christ the "foundation of the prophets and apostles," that is, whom they placed in the church by their doctrine and writings, by which he maketh them to differ from ordinary minis-

ters: "And are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles."

7. There is a sweet harmony and full agreement between the doctrine and writings of the prophets and apostles: as in all other things, so especially in holding forth Jesus Christ for a foundation and rock of salvation unto believers; the latter having taught and written nothing but what was partly prefigured in types, and partly foretold in prophecies by the former, Acts xxvi. 22, 23; for Paul affirmeth that the same foundation, Christ, was laid by both, while he saith, "Built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles."

8. How little ground the papists have from this or any other scripture blasphemously to teach that the pope is the foundation of the universal church visible, in whose voice and sentence the faith of all believers ought to be determined and built, appeareth not only from the meaning of the words asserted in the exposition, but also from this, that all the apostles are spoken of, as having equal influence upon this foundation, so that Peter, whose successor the pope doth plead himself to be, had no privilege in this above the rest; for he saith, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles."

9. Though men are easily moved to combine together in ill, Psa. lxxxiii. 3, as being naturally inclined to it, Gen. vi. 5; yet such is the antipathy of every man by nature unto that which is truly good, Rom. iii. 12, and unto all other men in that which is good; that nothing less was required for uniting all the elect among themselves, so as to make them jointly endeavour the bringing about of God's glory in their own salvation, than that Jesus Christ should interpose as an arbiter with power, causing the parties at variance to be at peace, and become a centre, wherein all those scattered lines might meet, and a corner, wherein the several walls and stones of the building are conjoined: for, saith Paul, it was necessary, in order to this union, that "Jesus Christ himself should be the extreme corner stone."

VER. 21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

This stately edifice is described, secondly, from the artificial and altogether divine structure and joining together of all its parts, which is the beauty of any building. This orderly frame and curious structure of the church, consisteth in these two. First, that the whole edifice and all its parts are firmly joined "in him," that is, in Christ the foundation, to wit, by faith; their life being framed according to his prescript and example, Matt. xi. 29, and their faith embracing him, according as he is held forth in the word, without addition or diminution, Col. ii. 6, even as the whole frame of a material building is made conform to the foundation. Next, that all the parts of this edifice are strongly joined together among themselves by the grace of love, Col. iii. 14, and orderly situate, every one acting towards the good of another in their several stations, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26, in so far as they are regenerate, and consequently

are parts of this building, 1 Cor. xii. 5, even as all the parts of a material building have a commodious correspondency one to another, and thereby are fitly framed together. This edifice is described, thirdly, from its perpetual increase and growth, flowing also from Christ the foundation: which growth is to be understood, not only with respect to the whole body of the church, which groweth by the addition of new converts, Isa. liv. 3, but also, and mainly, to every member in particular, which do increase and grow in gifts and graces, 2 Pet. iii. 18. And, lastly, it is described from the end intended in rearing up this stately growing edifice, even to be an holy temple unto God, wherein he may manifest his presence, and be perpetually served and glorified, as it was in Solomon's temple, Psa. cxxxii. 13.

DOCTRINES.

1. Jesus Christ doth differ from the foundation of all other buildings in this, that the whole building, and every stone of it, doth take immediate band upon the foundation; all believers being most intimately joined to him by faith, and not by the intervening mediation of others, as it is in material buildings: for the apostle sheweth that all the building (no part thereof being excepted) is in him, while he saith, "In whom all the building."

2. As there is a strict conjunction, and a kind of proportion, between believers and Christ, as also among themselves, even such as is branched forth in the exposition of this verse; so a great part of the strength and beauty of the church, and of all its parts, consisteth in this conjunction and proportion; and nothing is more uncomely than for a believer to be disproportioned unto Christ, either in his faith, or practice, and to other believers in his coldrife affection to them, or his not acting orderly in his station for their good: for the apostle describeth this spiritual edifice from its divine structure and curious joining of all its parts, as that wherein a great part of its beauty and strength doth consist: "in whom all the building fitly framed together."

3. As this spiritual edifice doth differ from other buildings, that not only the whole edifice, but also all the parts of it, 1 Pet. ii. 5, are endued with life; a life which is wholly spiritual, and floweth from their union with Christ the foundation; so this life of theirs is for the time but imperfect, their spiritual graces having not as yet attained that fulness and strength which is required: for the apostle, while he ascribeth a spiritual growth to all the building, doth imply both those, seeing growth supponeth life, and want of just stature and perfection: "In whom all the building groweth."

4. As growth in grace is a privilege which appertaineth to all the parts of this spiritual building who are yet on earth, so this growth of theirs doth flow from their union and communion with Christ; and the more their union be improved to the daily extracting of a renewed influence from him, they cannot choose but thrive the better in this their spiritual growth: for the apostle ascribeth growth to all this building, and growth from their being in Christ, and virtue coming from him; "In whom all the building groweth,"

and "in the Lord : " which words, it seemeth, are added to show that not only the first beginnings, but also the continued progress and increase of grace, do flow from the Lord Christ.

5. As growth of grace in every particular believer, so the increase of the church in general, by the addition of new converts, doth flow, not from created might or power, Zech. iv. 6, but from the virtue of Jesus Christ who, having the nations given him for an inheritance, Psa. ii. 8, will, in despite of all opposition, enlarge the bounds of his dominion, until he attain the full possession of all to whom he hath a right : for this growth is to be understood also with respect to the whole body, by the addition of new members ; in which respect also the apostle here saith, " It groweth in the Lord."

6. As all believers jointly, and each believer apart, 1 Cor. vi. 19, are a temple for the Lord, wherein he doth manifest his special presence, and wherein he will be worshipped, by offering up spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praises, and all the duties of new obedience, 1 Pet. ii. 9 ; so that they may be a temple indeed for this holy God, they must be much in the study of holiness, as in that which becometh his house, Psa. cxiii. 5, for the apostle sheweth that this whole building groweth up to be a temple for God, and an holy temple : " All the building groweth unto an holy temple."

7. The more that believers do endeavour to grow in grace, without resting upon any measure, they may expect the more of God's special presence to be manifested in them as in his own temple : for it is the growing of this building mainly which maketh it fit to be a temple for God : " All the building groweth unto an holy temple."

VER. 22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The apostle doth now, in the next and last place, apply what he hath said of this spiritual edifice, and of the church's happy estate under that similitude, unto those believing Ephesians in particular, by showing that even they were built up, together with all other sincere believers, upon Jesus Christ the foundation, and for this end, that they might be a place of habitation where God might dwell, as manifesting his special presence in them, by the saving operations of his Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINES.

1. That our faith may be saving, and our comfort solid, it is necessary, not only that we know and believe those excellent privileges which belong to the church of God in general : but we must also, observing the due order, make application of them unto ourselves in particular : for Paul teacheth so much, while having set forth the happy estate of all believers in general, he maketh application thereof unto those Ephesians in particular : " In whom also ye are builded together," saith he.

2. That this particular application may be

made in due order, it is necessary that in the first place we make application of Christ unto ourselves, laying hold upon him by faith ; that so being in him, we may have right unto all those saving privileges which are purchased by him : for the apostle sheweth this was the order wherein those privileges were applied unto the believing Ephesians ; they were first united to Christ, and so had access unto all the rest which follow : " In whom also ye are builded together for an habitation of God."

3. That we may rightly apply Christ unto ourselves, it is necessary that we lay hold upon him in order to all those ends for which he is offered in the gospel, even to those which imply an obligation upon us of duty, both unto other believers and unto God : for those Ephesians were so united to Christ by faith, that, as a consequence thereof, they were also united one to another, and to all believers, by love, and made an habitation for God : " In whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God."

4. Jesus Christ doth differ from the foundations of other buildings in this, that every particular believer is not only laid upon him, and supported by him, as it is in material buildings ; but they are also indented in him, and hid, as it were, in the clefts of that rock by saving faith ; so that the foundation covereth the whole building, and serveth for a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat, Isa. xxv. 4 ; for he saith not, " upon whom," but " in whom ye also are builded."

5. As all believers, how far soever removed by large distance, are yet most strictly tied and joined together ; so by taking band with Christ the foundation, they are fastened one to another, even as the stones of a building ; for he saith, " In whom ye are builded together : " union among themselves did follow upon their being in him.

6. The more deeply engaged that any have been before conversion in Satan's service, and the slavery of their lusts, their after conversion, and being builded upon Christ for an habitation to God, is the rarer privilege, the more to be admired and highly esteemed of ; for he saith not simply, " in whom ye are builded," but " in whom ye also : " which heighteneth the purpose, as a thing wonderful, and hardly credible, the apostle having an eye doubtless to their former slavery unto Satan, and their own lusts, spoken of in ver. 2, 3.

7. So inseparable is that union and connexion among the persons of the blessed Trinity, that the presence and indwelling of one is sufficient to prove the indwelling of all ; for they are an habitation to God the Father and Son, because the Spirit did dwell in them and sanctify them ; " An habitation of God through the Spirit."

8. Though all the external actions of the God-head do belong to all the persons of the blessed Trinity ; yet some of those actions are usually ascribed unto one, more than the rest, according as they carry some proportion or likeness to the personal properties of each person ; for the sanctification of believers, (in regard of which effect God is said to dwell in believers, seeing he thereby doth manifest his special presence in them,)

is here ascribed unto the Spirit, while those Ephesians are said to be "an habitation unto God through the Spirit."

CHAPTER III.

In the first part of this chapter, (which beginneth ver. 2,) the apostle setteth forth the dignity of his apostolic office towards the Gentiles, with his calling to it, and qualifications for it. And first, he propoundeth the matter briefly, that this office was committed to him, ver. 2. Next, he doth more largely illustrate it. First, by showing his qualification and furniture for this office, to wit, his knowledge and insight in the mystery of the gospel, which he was to preach: for proof whereof, he appealeth to what he had written in the two former chapters, ver. 3, 4; and having called the gospel a mystery, he sheweth the reason why he did so, to wit, because it was not so known of old, as now under the gospel, ver. 5; and giveth a brief sum of this mystery, as to that part of it which was most controverted, to wit, the calling of the Gentiles to the free enjoyment of gospel privileges, ver. 6; next, by showing his call from God, and authority to dispense this furniture; where he taketh occasion to extol and magnify his office, and the grace of God, which called him to it, from eight distinct considerations. First, from the gifts wherewith he was furnished to discharge it. Secondly, from the assistance of God's Spirit, which wrought in and by him in the discharge of it, ver. 7. Thirdly, from his own unworthiness, who was entrusted with it. Fourthly, from the excellency of the subject matter, which he was to set forth, even "the unsearchable riches of Christ," ver. 8. Fifthly, from the great benefit which, by his conscientious discharging thereof, was to accrete unto men, even their more clear understanding of that mystery, ver. 9. Sixthly, from the same benefit, which did thereby redound to the glorified angels, ver. 10. Seventhly, from the eternity of God's purpose to entrust him in that office, for bringing about the forementioned ends, ver. 11. And lastly, from three excellent privileges, boldness, access, confidence, wherof believers did partake by the means of his ministry; as being thereby brought to Christ, in whom they enjoyed all those, ver. 12; from all which grounds he dehortheth them from fainting, notwithstanding of his present sad sufferings, in discharging so honourable an employment, ver. 13.

In the second part of the chapter, he doth indirectly incite them to persevere and make progress in the experimental knowledge of and in communion with Christ, by giving a sum of his fervent prayers unto God for them to that purpose. The occasion of which prayer is, ver. 1, his gesture in prayer; and to whom he did pray, to wit, God, described from his relation to Christ and the church, are, ver. 14, 15. The particulars prayed for, are, 1. Their strengthening in the inward man by the Spirit, ver. 16. 2. Christ's inhabiting their heart by faith, ver. 17. 3. Their experimental knowledge and comprehension of

Christ's boundless love, flowing from their firm adhering to the love of God in Christ by faith, ver. 17—19. 4. Their full replenishing with the perfection of all graces in glory, ver. 19. The conclusion of his prayer containeth a description of God, taken from his almighty power to do above our petitions and conceptions, ver. 20, and a thanksgiving unto God, so described, and upon that ground, ver. 21.

VER. 1. For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;

This verse belongeth to the purpose contained in the second part of the chapter, which, being begun here, is interrupted until ver. 14. The reason whereof shall be shown, ver. 2. In the mean time he doth here declare the occasion of his following prayer to God on their behalf to have been even that which he hath but presently spoken concerning them, to wit, their being already builded upon Christ by faith, together with all true believers; for the words, "for this cause," relate to the close of the preceding chapter. And withal, that his praying to God so fervently for them may have the more weight, in order to their up-stirring to endeavour after that which he prayeth for, he describeth himself, who is to pray for them, from his present captivity and bonds, under which he was at Rome for the truth of Christ, and for the behoof and edification of the Gentiles, (of whom these Ephesians were a part;) for Paul being entrusted, in a peculiar manner, to be the apostle and doctor of the Gentiles, 1 Tim. ii. 7; it followeth, that all his sufferings, in discharge of that trust, were for their sake. Besides, that the nearest cause of his sufferings from the Jews, his chief adversaries, was his carrying of the gospel unto the Gentiles, Acts xxii. 21, 22.

DOCTRINES.

1. The pains of ministers with and for the Lord's people, are so far from being at an end when people are brought to Christ and built upon him by faith, that even their being brought this length doth lay a new tie upon their ministers, both to deal with God on their behalf, and to labour with themselves so much the more earnestly, that, not only they do not lose those things which are already wrought, 2 John ver. 8, but also they may make progress answerable unto their fair beginnings; lest otherwise they mar their own comfort, Psa. li. 12, make the name of God to be evil spoken of, 2 Sam. xii. 14, and thereby draw down sore corrections upon themselves, 2 Sam. xii. 10; for the apostle, his praying so fervently upon their behalf, and thereby stirring them up to endeavour after that themselves, which he did pray for, was occasioned by their being built upon Christ for an habitation unto God; "for this cause," saith he, "I Paul do bow my knees," as it followeth, ver. 14, which closeth up the sentence begun here.

2. Such powerful influence hath God upon hearts, that he can make those who for the time are cruel persecutors of truth, prove afterwards famous martyrs, and sufferers for it; for Paul

was once a bloody persecutor, Gal. i. 13, but is now a famous sufferer; "I Paul, the prisoner," saith he, or as it is in the original, "that prisoner," implying he was no ordinary, but a noted sufferer; his sufferings being in a manner singular, 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.

3. Sufferings for Christ and truth, are so far from being cause of just reproach to those who suffer from others, or from being matter of shame and blushing to themselves, that they are rather a glory unto them, yea, and sometimes will be gloried in by them, as that wherein their chiefest honour standeth; for Paul, after the example of kings and nobles, who design themselves by their most honourable styles, doth in place of all take this one, of a prisoner for truth, unto himself; "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ."

4. So far ought people to be from stumbling at truth, because of the oppressed and suffering lot of those who preach it, that even their sufferings for truth should make their pains the more acceptable, and add a weight unto the word of truth in their mouth; for Paul describeth himself from his present suffering lot, that both his person and pains might have the more weight and efficacy with them; "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ."

5. The Lord doth sometimes give so far way to the rage of persecutors, as that the choicest instruments for carrying on his work may be, for a season, restrained in their liberty, and so laid aside as useless, even in a time when there is greatest need of their pains and diligence; for Paul, an eminent instrument, 1 Cor. xv. 10, was at such a time cast in prison; "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ."

6. No afflictions or sufferings do loose a pastor from his duty towards the Lord's people, over whom he is set; but when he is restrained in his liberty from preaching to them, he ought even then endeavour their edification by writing to them, and praying for them; for Paul being a prisoner, doth yet write to those Ephesians, and pray for them; "I Paul, the prisoner, do bow my knees."

7. A prisoner for Christ and truth hath this advantage beyond all other prisoners in ordinary wars, he is a prisoner, not so much to those who persecute him, as to Jesus Christ, his own lord and general: and that not only because he suffereth in his quarrel, but also he remaineth still in his custody, Gen. xxxix. 21, and at his disposal, who overruleth the rage of enemies so as that they cannot do the meanest prisoner of his any further hurt than seemeth good unto him, Dan. iii. 17; for in both those respects Paul doth call himself Christ's prisoner; he was imprisoned for his sake, and at and during his overruling will and pleasure; "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ."

8. The Lord doth so outwit his enemies, as their very restraining and imprisoning his servants doth, contrary to their intention, tend to the furtherance of the gospel; all their sufferings of that sort being real confirmations of the truth preached by them, Phil. i. 17, and speaking examples for others to imitate, Jam. v. 10; for Paul sheweth that his sufferings were for the

Gentiles, though not for their redemption, 1 Cor. i. 13, yet for their good and edification in the mentioned respects; "I Paul, the prisoner for you Gentiles."

9. This may exceedingly sweeten the sharpest sufferings of God's servants, when they consider they suffer nothing but what is measured out unto them by their Lord Christ; that their sufferings are not for evil doing, but for him and his truth who suffered for them, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; and that not only their own salvation, but the salvation also of others, is some one way or other advanced by their sufferings; for Paul's sufferings are sweetened from this, that he was "the prisoner of Jesus Christ," and "for the Gentiles."

VER. 2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward :

Here beginneth the first part of the chapter, wherein the apostle, by way of digression, setteth forth the dignity of his apostolic office towards the Gentiles; that thereby he may not only guard them from stumbling at his sufferings, as is clear from ver. 13, but also give a reason of what he presently said, ver. 1, that he was a prisoner for them, to wit, because he had his office from God towards them: for lest they had doubted of the truth of that assertion, he presently breaketh off the former sentence in the very entry, without putting a close to it, until ver. 14, as judging it more safe to keep them a little in suspense, and ignorant of that which he began to speak of, than to leave them with a doubt about the truth of any thing which he had already spoken; seeing ignorance of things, not yet revealed, is not so hazardous as misbelief of those truths which were revealed and known.

And therefore, in the first branch of the first part of the chapter, contained in this verse, the apostle doth briefly declare, that the apostolic office of dispensing and ministerial distributing the doctrine of free grace and salvation contained in the Gospel, here (called the grace of God, as Tit. ii. 11,) was committed unto him with relation chiefly to the Gentiles, and particularly to those Ephesians. (See upon Col. i. ver. 25, Doct. 3.) And as to the truth of this assertion, he appealeth to their own knowledge and conscience, if they had not heard it, and were not sufficiently instructed in it: for the conditional particle "if," implieth not any doubt of the thing but rather his great confidence, that they neither could nor would contradict it, seeing it was a thing publicly known from the history of his conversion, Gal. i. 22, 23; and doubtless also from his own preaching while he was among them, Acts xix. 10.

DOCTRINES.

1. Where a minister is called, and sent by God unto a people, not only his sermons, but also his actions and carriage, yea, his very sufferings in the discharge of his calling, are blessed of God to be powerful preachings for the good and edification of those among them whom God

intendeth good for: for Paul proveth he was a prisoner for the Gentiles, or that his imprisonment and sufferings did contribute for their good and edification, because he was called of God to dispense the gospel unto them; "If ye have heard of the dispensation, which is given me to you-ward."

2. The ministerial office is not a lordly dominion, but a stewardship, whereby the Lord himself, who is great master of that family, ver. 15, which is his house and church, 1 Tim. iii. 15, doth entrust some to break and divide the bread of life unto the rest: which therefore they must do with that measure of faithfulness, 1 Cor. iv. 2, and wisdom, Matt. xxiv. 45, as they may be answerable unto him who hath entrusted them; for he calleth the ministerial office entrusted to him, the dispensation, which signifieth the ordering of things belonging to the family so as may be most for its behoof; and being applied unto God, with relation to his church, it signifieth a most absolute power to dispose of those things as he pleaseth; so is it taken, Col. i. 25; but being applied unto his ministers, as it is here, it signifieth only a subordinate ministerial power for which the person entrusted must be countable, such as is the office of a steward in great families. (See 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.) "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace," &c.

3. The great thing which ministers are to dispense and distribute unto the Lord's family, is the doctrine of salvation through free grace. They are indeed to dispense threatenings also, and to inculcate the terror of God's wrath, Matt. iii. 12. Only their great design in all should be, that people may be thereby fitted to embrace the offer of grace and salvation in the gospel: for the apostle calleth that which he was to dispense, the grace of God, to wit, the doctrine of grace, "The dispensation of the grace of God."

4. The Lord's people ought carefully to lay up and remember what they hear of the Lord's word from, or of his dealing with, his servants; that so they may make use of it afterwards, when God calleth them to it: and more especially they would not forget what may convincingly clear unto their consciences a minister's calling, and his being sent from God unto them; whereby his doctrine, life, and sufferings, may have the greater weight with them: for Paul supposeth they did perfectly remember what they heard of his calling to the Gentiles, and therefore doth appeal to their testimony, while he saith, "If ye have heard of the dispensation," &c.

5. As there is no less concredited unto called ministers by God to hold forth unto the Lord's people, than the doctrine of salvation through free grace, the greatest of all truths; so whatever is committed or given by God unto them, is not for themselves alone, but for the good of those also unto whom they are sent; and therefore God doth usually deal the better with ministers for the people's sake: for the relative "which," doth relate to the antecedent, "grace," and Paul saith, "This grace," or, the doctrine of the gospel, "is given me to you-ward."

VER. 3. How that by revelation he made known

unto me the mystery (as I wrote before in few words,

4. Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)

The apostle, being (in the second branch of the first part of the chapter to ver. 13,) more largely to illustrate what he did but briefly assert, ver. 2; to wit, that the apostolic office of dispensing the gospel to the Gentiles was committed unto him, doth first show, to ver. 7, that he was sufficiently furnished by God with knowledge and insight in the doctrine of the gospel concredited to him. And in those two verses he declareth, not only the nature of this doctrine, that it is a mystery, or sacred secret, but also, that it was made known unto him by God, together with the manner how he came to the knowledge of it, to wit, by extraordinary revelation from God, and not by ordinary means, as is more clearly expressed, Gal. i. 12; and for proof of his knowledge and insight in this mystery, he referreth them to what he hath written succinctly of it in the two former chapters, in which he hath, by a most divine and ravishing strain, set forth the grounds, causes, and means of salvation, and made application of all both to Jew and Gentile, which is the very comprehensive sum of this mystery, ver. 3; from which two preceding chapters, being diligently perpended and read by them, he doubteth not but they should find he had not arrogantly, and without ground, ascribed to himself a great measure of knowledge and insight in that mystery, which he calleth the mystery of Christ; because Christ is the chief subject of the gospel, 1 Cor. ii. 2, and the very mystery of that mystery, 1 Tim. iii. 16. This is contained, ver. 4.

From ver. 3, learn, 1. Whoever are called by God to undergo any office in his house, they are in some measure, greater or lesser, competently furnished and fitted by him for that employment: and therefore giftless ministers were never sent by God; for Paul having shown that the apostolic office was committed unto him by God, ver. 2, he now declareth how God had furnished him for it; "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery."

2. That the gospel is a mystery, and in what respects it is so, see chap. i. ver. 9, Doct. 1. "He made known unto me the mystery."

3. The Lord doth usually manifest himself, more or less, unto his servants, according to the nature, weight, and difficulty of those employments unto which he doth call them: for he maketh himself manifest to Paul by extraordinary revelation, because he was to serve him in an extraordinary embassy, as an apostle; "How that by revelation he made known unto me."

4. As Christ's ministers may sometimes in sobriety speak to the commendation of their own knowledge, and of their other ministerial abilities, to wit, when they are necessitated to assert and avow their calling from God; so it is most safe to speak no further to that purpose, than they have formerly given some proof of, in discharge of their calling, to which they may ap-

peal, as an undeniable confirmation of what they affirm; lest otherwise their bare assertion be taken for vain vaunting and arrogant boasting: for Paul being called to speak of his own knowledge and abilities, as an evidence of his calling from God, referreth them to that proof, which he had given thereof in his former writings, while he saith, "As I wrote before in few words."

5. The doctrine of salvation revealed unto and preached by the apostles, is contained in their writings, and therefore there is no necessity of unwritten traditions; for the apostle, proving that this mystery was revealed to him, he doth not refer them to what he had preached unto them for the space of two years, Acts xix. 10, but to his writings, which had been no adequate proof, except he had written the sum of all which was revealed unto him, at least of so much as was necessary for them to know; "As I wrote before in few words."

6. The Spirit of God speaking in Scripture, hath comprised large and comprehensive purpose, even the whole plot of man's salvation, and the sum of man's duty, in a small bulk and few words; as knowing that reading much would be but wearisomeness to the flesh, Eccles. xii. 12, and intending that the gift of interpretation and expounding Scripture should have place in the church, 1 Cor. xii. 8; for Paul, the penman of the Spirit of God, giveth a comprehensive sum of the whole gospel in the two first chapters, with relation to which he saith here, "I wrote before in few words."

From ver. 4, learn, 1. The brevity of Scripture, and comprehensive largeness of the purpose contained in it, do not occasion any such obscurity in Scripture, but by diligent reading the mind of God therein may be found out and understood: for notwithstanding Paul hath shown he had comprehended that whole mystery in few words, yet, saith he, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand."

2. The word of God therefore ought to be frequently read, and diligently perused by all the Lord's people; this being one mean, and second to none, (except public preaching, Rom. x. 14, 15,) which the Lord doth bless, as for other ends, so for attaining to know and understand the purpose and subject-matter contained in the word; for Paul supposeth it was their duty to read what he had written, and sheweth by reading they should "understand his knowledge in the mystery."

3. Even private Christians, through diligent reading of Scripture, may attain to such a measure of knowledge and understanding, as may enable them to judge of the abilities, gifts, and doctrine of ministers; for Paul, speaking even to private Christians amongst those Ephesians, saith, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

4. Though private Christians are not to sit [cite] themselves as public judges of the doctrine of ministers, 1 Cor. xiv. 32, neither should they delight much in venting their private judgment, especially their carping censures, James i. 19, yet they are not, as stupid blocks, without trial and examination. to receive whatever the minis-

ter saith; but ought to pass a private judgment of discretion upon what they hear, whether it be truth or error, right or wrong, in so far, at least, as may regulate their own practice in choosing or refusing what they hear, 1 Thess. v. 21; for Paul alloweth unto those Ephesians to pass such a judgment upon his own doctrine and abilities; "Ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

VER. 5. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:

The apostle giveth a reason why he called the gospel (the knowledge whereof was revealed unto him) "a mystery," and thereby doth also prove, that there was a necessity of extraordinary revelation for bringing him to the knowledge of it, to wit, because this doctrine of salvation through free grace by Christ, and more especially the calling of the Gentiles to partake of this salvation in all respects equally with the Jews, (which is chiefly intended by the mystery here spoken of, as is clear from ver. 6.) was not so fully and clearly made known in the former ages of the world unto any of the sons of men, whether without or within the church, as it was now under the gospel revealed immediately by the Spirit of God unto the holy apostles, (who these were, see upon Col. i. ver. 1, Doct. 2.) and the prophets of the New Testament, (spoken of Acts xv. 32, xxi. 8—10, Eph. iv. 11,) who being extraordinarily assisted by the Spirit of God, did not only open up the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament, confirming and proving the doctrine of the gospel from these, but also did foretell things to come.

DOCTRINES.

1. The children of men are naturally ignorant of gospel truths, and know no further of them than God is pleased to reveal and make known unto them; for the apostle sheweth that the sons of men were passive, as to the measure of light which was attained unto of those truths: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed."

2. The Lord in bestowing grace and the saving knowledge of himself, doth act as a most free agent, not constrained by any necessity, so that he dispenseth grace to whom he will, Rom. ix. 18, to some more sparingly, and to others more liberally, whether we compare times with times, or persons with persons in one and the same time, Rom. xii. 3; for he hath revealed the saving knowledge of this mystery now under the gospel in a greater measure than he did formerly: "Which in other ages was not made known as is now revealed," saith he.

3. Neither the doctrine of salvation through free grace by Christ, nor God's purpose to call the Gentiles to partake of this salvation equally with the Jews, was altogether unknown to the ancient church before Christ came; there being several manifestations of the former in the covenant of grace, as it was first revealed unto Adam, Gen. iii. 15, and after renewed with Abraham,

Gen. xvii. 7, David, 2. Sam. xxiii. 5, and commented upon by the prophets, Isa. liii. 3, &c., and many full prophecies also of the latter, which the apostles themselves did make use of to confirm the calling of the Gentiles, as Acts xiii. 47, cited from Isa. xlix. 6, and Acts xv. 15, cited from Amos ix. 11, for the apostle doth not simply deny that the former ages had any knowledge of this mystery at all, but comparatively: "It was not in other ages made known, as it is now revealed." But, fourthly, neither the doctrine of salvation, nor yet the calling of the Gentiles, were so fully or clearly revealed under the Old Testament as they are now under the New; both of them being but sparingly spoken to then, Matt. xiii. 17, and what was spoken, for the most part, wrapped up in a veil of types and shadows, so that they could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished, 2 Cor. iii. 13. The latter, to wit, the calling of the Gentiles, being only then foretold, and prophesied of; and therefore could not be so distinctly, solidly, and satisfyingly known, as now when it is accomplished: besides that the time when, and the manner how, it was to be accomplished, and particularly that the Gentiles should have access unto the church without an entrance by the door of circumcision. Those, I say, were either not at all, or but very sparingly revealed, so that even the apostles themselves, after Christ's ascension, did doubt and hesitate much about the truth of this mystery, until it was more fully revealed, Acts x. 10, &c.; for, saith Paul, "Which in other ages was not made known, as it is now revealed."

5. As Christ's servants may be sometimes necessitated to speak unto the commendation of their own receipts from God; so Christian sobriety will teach them to be so far from disparaging, or undervaluing the receipts of others, to render themselves thereby the more esteemed of, that they will endeavour to have others, who are equally deserving, to partake with them in that deserved esteem which they challenge unto themselves: for Paul, having begun to speak, ver. 3, of that knowledge of this mystery, which was revealed unto himself, doth here affirm the same of all the apostles and prophets: "As it is now revealed unto the apostles and prophets."

6. Though God might easily communicate the knowledge of himself unto all whom he intendeth to save, in a way extraordinary, immediately, and without the help of second means, Acts ii. ver. 4, yet he hath rather chosen to communicate his mind so, unto some few only, who have, some of them at least, at his appointment, 2 Pet. i. 21, set down in sacred writ what they themselves did immediately receive from God, 1 John i. 1, by which means the knowledge of God may, in an ordinary way, be conveyed unto others, John xx. 31. The Lord hereby preventing Satan's design, who would otherwise have obtruded upon people his own delusions, in place of immediate revelations from God, 2 Chron. xviii. 21, and trying the obedience of his people, if they will subject themselves unto his will and word in the mouth of his servants, Matt. x. 40, as also gently spurring their infirmity and weakness, who could not, one among a thousand, carry aright those extraordinary manifestations of God unto their

spirits, 2 Cor. xii. 7; for, saith Paul, this mystery was "revealed by the Spirit," to wit, immediately, not unto all, but to "his holy apostles and prophets."

7. As all the Lord's ministers ought to be inherently holy, not only because of the precept enjoining so much in a special manner unto ministers, Tit. i. 8, but also for the more successful discharging of their office; seeing the secret of the Lord is with them who fear him, Psal. xxv. 14, and the lips of the righteous feed many, Prov. x. 21, and as all the extraordinary office-bearers (for what is revealed, Judas alone excepted) and penmen of holy Scripture were really sanctified and holy; so inherent holiness, without a peculiar illumination of the Spirit of God, superadded for that end, is not sufficient for giving clear light and insight into gospel mysteries: for he giveth the apostles and prophets the epithet of holy, to show they themselves were so, and all ministers ought to be so; and yet this mystery behoved to be "revealed" unto them "by the Spirit," even "to the holy apostles and prophets."

VER. 6. That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel:

The apostle doth here give a brief sum of that mystery which was revealed unto him, as to that part of it at least which was most controverted, to wit, that the Pagan Gentiles were now called to enjoy, and real believers among them actually did enjoy most excellent privileges. As, first, of being joint-heirs of the heavenly inheritance with the believers of the Jewish nation, Gal. iii. 29, and with Christ himself, Rom. viii. 17. Secondly, of being incorporated with the church of God in one mystical body, whereof Christ is the head. (See upon Eph. i. 22, 23.) And, thirdly, of partaking with the believing Jews of the covenant promise made by God to Abraham and his seed, Gen. xvii. 7, so that they were now within the bond of the covenant of grace. He declareth also, that all those privileges were purchased for them, and freely bestowed upon them by Christ, and by virtue of their being in him by faith, in whom they had equal interest with the believing Jews themselves; and that they were brought to this happy estate by the alone preaching of the gospel, and by faith in it, without the ceremonial law and circumcision. All which were mysteries to the ancient church. (See upon ver. 5. Doct. 4.) Hence learn, 1. There is a necessary concatenation among those three, to wit, a right to heaven, union with Christ's mystical body, and saving interest in the covenant of grace. The enjoying of any one whereof implieth the other two; and if one of those be wanting, the rest are wanting also: for the apostle speaketh of them as mutually depending one upon another: "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs," &c.

2. As every renewed child of God is an heir of the heavenly inheritance, so the multitude of heirs doth not lessen the inheritance, nor make the privilege of being an heir of heaven the less glorious; yea, it addeth unto the glory of it; for

he placeth a great part of their privilege in this, not simply that they were heirs, but fellow-heirs.

3. It is a great and glorious privilege to be a part of that mystical body whereof Christ is head; and that because of the strict union which such have with Christ, (see ver. 17,) and with all believers in Christ, Eph. ii. 15, and because of that influence of life and spirit, which, being in Christ without measure, John iii. 34, is communicated unto them, every one in his own measure, Eph. iv. 16, as also because of their interest in all the common privileges of that body, Rom. viii. 30, and in the gifts and graces of every member thereof, 1 Cor. iii. 22; for Paul speaketh of this as an excellent privilege bestowed on the Gentiles under the New Testament, even "that they should be of the same body."

4. It is a privilege no less great and glorious, to have saving interest in the covenant of grace and the promises thereof; for thereby we have access to both the former privileges; and all the saving blessings of that covenant, comprised in the many large, precious, and comprehensive promises thereof, do become ours: for the apostle speaketh of this as of another excellent privilege bestowed upon the Gentiles, even, "that they should be partakers of his promise."

5. As Jesus Christ hath purchased all those glorious privileges and saving blessings, to which the people of God can lay any claim or interest; so there is no actual enjoyment of any part of his purchase, except by those who are savingly in Christ, and united to him by faith; for this expression, "in Christ," speaketh both that those things were purchased by him, and were enjoyed by their being in him: "partakers of his promise in Christ."

6. The gospel (especially when it is preached by a sent minister, Rom. x. 15,) is a powerful mean, through God's blessing, for gaining ground upon most desperate sinners, and for prevailing with them to close by faith with Christ as he is offered; by virtue whereof their state is changed, and they made holy, happy, and blessed; for the Gentiles, whose desperate case in time past was set forth, chap. ii. 12, are now made "fellow-heirs of one body, partakers of his promise in Christ," or being united to him, and this all "by the gospel."

VER. 7. Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power.

The apostle having in the preceding verses declared how he had attained a large measure of knowledge and insight in the mystery of the gospel, doth now (in further enlargement of what he did but briefly assert, ver. 2,) show, that he was called by God to undergo the apostolic office of dispensing that mystery, and doth jointly extol and magnify his office, from eight distinct considerations, to ver. 13.

And in this verse, having asserted his calling from God to be a minister of the gospel unto the Gentiles, he doth magnify this his office, as also

make it appear that he was called to it, first, from the gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary, which he was furnished with in the discharging of it; and, secondly, from the powerful assistance of God's Spirit, enabling him to exercise those gifts, notwithstanding of many difficulties, and giving admirable success to his ministry both far and near, Rom. xv. 19, 20. All which, to wit, his calling, gifts, and divine assistance, he doth ascribe to God's grace and free favour.

DOCTRINES.

1. The very apostolic office itself was no lordly dominion, or place of honour and ease, but a laborious ministry and service, wherein the person entrusted was to bestir himself to the utmost of his activity and diligence, for the honour of Christ and good of his church: for the word rendered "minister," which Paul here taketh unto himself, doth signify a painful, vehement labour, as those who make haste in travel, raising the dust by their celerity and speed: "Whereof I was made a minister," saith he.

2. It is not sufficient warrant for any to meddle with the ministerial office, that he hath competent gifts fitting him for it, except he have also ministerial power and authority conveyed unto him, either immediately by God, as it was in the calling of the apostles, Gal. i. 1, or, mediately, according to that order which God hath established in his church, as is in the calling of ordinary ministers, Acts xiv. 23, for Paul distinguisheth these two, his being sufficiently furnished with the knowledge of the gospel, whereof he spoke from ver. 3, and his authority and power to preach the gospel unto others, of which he speaketh here, while he saith, "whereof I was made a minister."

3. Though ability and gifts be not that which maketh a man a called minister, as said is; yet when men, being otherwise orderly called, are competently furnished with gifts and endowments, and are accompanied with the influence of God's blessing upon the exercise of their parts, it is a speaking evidence and confirmation of their calling from God, not only unto themselves, but also unto others who would otherwise possibly doubt of it: for Paul doth not only magnify his office, but also make it evident that he was called to it, from these two, while he saith, "I am made a minister according to the gift bestowed on me," and "by," or as it is in the original, "according to the effectual working of his power."

4. As it is required to make a man a minister, that he be endued with competent abilities and gifts for that employment; so it is no less requisite that God do concur with him; otherwise he cannot exercise his gift, and make use of it for the good of others, 2 Cor. iii. 5, or though he exercise it, yet all his utmost endeavours will be fruitless and without success among the people, 1 Cor. iii. 6; for Paul sheweth besides the gift which he received of grace, God did also concur with him: "According to the gift of the grace of God, by the effectual working of his power."

5. Though the Lord give competency of gifts unto all whom he calleth, yet he giveth not unto all one and the same gift, or in the same measure; but to some a greater, to others a lesser, as

he hath more or less to do with them; for as Paul was singularly employed, so he had a singular gift, and therefore he saith, "the gift of the grace given to me," thereby implying there was somewhat singular in his gift.

6. So great and many are those difficulties which ministers have often to wrestle with, what from without, and what from within, before they can attain to freedom and boldness in exercising their ministerial gift, Gal. iv. 13, 14; so difficult is it also to gain ground upon hearts by the ministry of the word, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, that no less is required, either for the one or the other, than the power of God, his working power, and working effectually with a kind of pith and energy; for Paul's necessity called for no less, even "the effectual working of his power."

7. As it is no small grace and favour from God for any to be employed in the ministerial calling, and competently furnished with gifts and parts for that employment, and to have their labours blessed with success in gaining many souls to God; so a gracious minister will be ready at all occasions to acknowledge grace in all these, ascribing all to God's favour, and his powerful working in him, and by him, and not to his own dignity, diligence, or parts: for so doth Paul here; "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God."

VER. 8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

The apostle doth extol and magnify his office, thirdly, from the consideration of his own unworthiness, which was so great, by reason, especially, of his enmity to Christ and the Christian church, while he was unconverted, 1 Tim. i. 13, that to his own apprehension, and for what he knew of himself and others, he was more unworthy, and less to be esteemed of, than the meanest of God's children and saints: and yet the apostolic office (called here grace, because it did flow from God's favour and grace) was bestowed upon him. And, fourthly, from the excellency of the subject matter, which he was engaged, by virtue of his office, to preach and set forth unto the Gentiles, even "the unsearchable riches of Christ," under which is comprehended the whole doctrine of the gospel, wherein are contained such things relating to Christ in his person, natures, and offices, and to the benefits of justification, adoption, sanctification, of grace here, and of glory hereafter, purchased by him, and bestowed upon the elect; and such things also relating to his manifold wisdom manifested in his various dispensation to his church in several ages, as are not only hid to natural men, but also above the reach of all created understanding (even though renewed by grace) to comprehend them fully in this life, until we see as we are seen, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; all which things are here called "riches," not only because of that unsearchable abundance, and worth, which are in the things themselves, but also because they make the elect (to whom they are offered, and upon

whom they are bestowed) truly rich, Rev. iii. 18, and possessors of all things, even though they have nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though whosoever a sinner doth turn to God, all his sins are freely pardoned, and in that respect forgotten, and past over by God as if they had never been, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22; yet the pardoned sinner himself should not forget, but so far keep them in memory, as he may be thereby kept humble, and little in his own eyes, so long as he liveth: for Paul did so much remember his by-past, and pardoned blasphemies, as that he accounteth himself "less than the least of all saints."

2. Growth in grace, and increase in humility, and in low esteem of a man's self, do usually go together, so that most eminent Christians, considering what they have been before conversion, 1 Cor. xv. 9, and what they yet are, because of the remnants of sin dwelling in them, Rom. vii. 18, should and will judge themselves the least of all saints, according to that deep insight and sense which they have of their own sins, being compared with the remote view which they take of the sins of others, Rom. xiv. 10; for so doth Paul judge of himself from those grounds; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints."

3. Sense of sin, and of self-unworthiness, ought so to abase and humble the child of God, as not to make him question, far less deny, that God hath any saving work in him; this latter not being true humility, but sinful ingratitude, which frequently hath its rise from an unmortified root of crushed pride, though it pretend to great humility: for Paul abaseth himself, and yet insinuateth that he is a saint, while he saith, "I am less than the least of all saints."

4. As all saints are not of one standing and size, but some greater, some lesser, and some less than the least, except themselves; so it is no small honour and dignity to be among the least of saints, and to have a work of saving grace, though but in the meanest degree; seeing even the meanest of saints have a choice room in God's heart, Psa. xl. 17; for while he saith, "I am the least of all saints," he declareth he thought it an honour to have any room among them.

5. Deep sense of sin, and of self-unworthiness in a child of God, do well consist with a confident pleading for and avowing of an interest in, yea, with admiration at, and extolling of the riches of God's mercy and free grace towards such an unworthy wretch, as he is: for both these were in Paul; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given."

6. The Lord in deepest wisdom doth often bestow the rarest gifts and graces upon such as, by reason of their former wickedness, are most conscious to themselves of their own unworthiness: yea, and sometimes will employ them in most eminent pieces of his service, as knowing such have somewhat to keep them humble, and make them ascribe the glory of what they do unto God, 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10; whereas others would readily take the glory unto themselves, being puffed up with their gifts and success, and so

should fall in the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6, for God's dealing with Paul, in giving him such excellent gifts, and the apostolic office from grace, proveth so much; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given."

7. The more unworthy that any is, upon whom the Lord bestoweth grace, and sheweth mercy, the glory of his grace is so much the more set forth, and shineth the more brightly: while as where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound, Rom. v. 20; for Paul commendeth the dignity of his calling, and the worth of that grace, by which he was called to that office, from his own baseness and unworthiness; "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given."

8. It concerneth a minister much, as to be deeply affected with the sense of his own unworthiness; so, seriously and frequently to ponder the weight and dignity of that trust which is put upon him, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, the dispensing whereof is committed unto him; that so with greater fear and reverence, care and diligence, he may take heed to his ministry, which he hath received in the Lord, to fulfil it, Col. iv. 17; for Paul considereth also the worth of that message, which he was intrusted with, while he saith, "that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

9. Though others of the apostles besides Paul were intrusted to carry the gospel unto the Gentiles, yet considering that he was so fully instructed in the knowledge of this mystery of the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles, ver. 3, and Rom. xi., and had a perpetual conflict with the Jews, through the whole course of his life in the defence of this truth, as is clear from the Acts of the apostles; as also that he hath committed more unto sacred writing to this purpose, for the use and benefit chiefly of the Gentiles, than any of the other apostles, therefore is it that Paul doth seem to have been intrusted in a peculiar manner with the charge of preaching the gospel unto, and being the apostle of, the Gentiles, which appeareth, as from other places, Acts xxvi. 17, 18, 1 Tim. ii. 7; so from this, "Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles."

10. Offices, and competency of gifts for discharging any office, are given of God to those who have them, and especially to ministers, not to keep them without use-making, Matt. xxv. 27; or, to make use of them only for gaining applause, or advantage to themselves, 2 Cor. iv. 5, but that they may employ them for the glory of God and the good of others: for this grace was given to Paul, "that he might preach among the Gentiles."

11. As Jesus Christ, with all that rich store and copious abundance of created graces and divine perfections which are in himself, and of satisfactory fulness which is in those many good things purchased by him, should be the main subject of a minister's preaching, whatever he preacheth besides of legal threatenings or duties, being made to relate some one way or other unto him; so Jesus Christ and the riches of the gos-

pel, are so large a field and subject, that the most gracious and able ministers will find daily purpose and fresh matter furnished of new, whereof to preach concerning it; yea, and never will be able to go through it: for Paul made Christ and the gospel the main subject of his preaching, and did find them unsearchable; "that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

12. Though those hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ, and the riches of his glory of his inheritance in the saints, and of all those other good things purchased by him, and offered in the gospel, go beyond the reach of all created understanding to know them fully; yet it is the duty of both pastors and people to search into them; there being as much knowledge of those unsearchable riches attainable, even here, as may encourage all to search, Hos. vi. 4; and nothing being more sweet upon earth, than to be swallowed up and overwhelmed in this deep and bottomless gulf of the unsearchable riches of Christ, when penury of thoughts, and want of enlarged hearts to comprehend that incomprehensible subject, necessitate the soul sometimes to succumb under the weight, to stand still, wonder, and exclaim, "O the depth of the riches," &c. Rom. xi. 33; for though those riches are unsearchable; yet Paul did search in them, for he preached them, and consequently they to whom he preached were obliged to search into them also; "That I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

VER. 9. And to make all *men* see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

He doth here, first, more fully express what he presently spoke of his preaching among the Gentiles, as also extol and magnify his office, fifthly, from the great good and benefit which was by his conscientious discharge thereof to accresce unto men, even the making evident unto all men, without any such distinction of nations or persons, as was kept under the ministry of the Old Testament, Gal. iii. 28, what that mystery of the union and association of Jews and Gentiles in one body was, whereby they have joint interest in the covenant of grace, in Christ the cautioner, and in all those spiritual blessings purchased by him. Next, he giveth a reason why he called this communion and fellowship a "mystery," and secret; because it was a thing hid, until the times of the apostles, in God's decree, and not revealed, at least so fully and clearly as then it was, (see ver. 5, Doct. 4.) and having made mention of God, he describeth him from his work of creating all things by Jesus Christ, the eternal word of the Father, John i. 1, and this most appositely to the present purpose, to wit, the calling of the Gentiles; as intending hereby to show, that none hath reason to wonder why God should save the Gentiles as well as the Jews by Christ; seeing he hath equal interest in them, as having created them both, and that by Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the Lord's ministers ought mainly to labour upon the affections of people, endeavouring to work them up to such a frame and temper as the word of God doth call for, 2 Tim. iv. 2; yet this also is a considerable part of the ministerial task, which they would endeavour in the first place, and in order to their more effectual and orderly moving of the affections, even to make the Lord's people understand the mind of God revealed in Scripture, as well concerning their sin and misery, as the remedy thereof held forth in the gospel, Acts ii. 22, 23, 38, 39, and therefore they would affect great plainness of speech, demitting themselves, so far as is possible, unto the capacity of the meanest: for Paul sheweth that the information of the judgment was that which he endeavoured with the first in the discharge of his ministry; "And to make all men see," saith he.

2. The word preached by sent ministers, is the Lord's ordinary mean and instrument by which he conveyeth the saving knowledge of gospel truths unto the elect; and that both by making these truths evident and plain, that so they may be known, being otherwise hid, Col. iv. 4, and by opening the eyes of their understanding, that they may see, being otherwise blind, Acts xxvi. 18; for the Lord employed Paul in the ministerial calling, "To make all men see, what is the fellowship," &c. The word signifieth both to make a thing evident, that it may be seen, and to give an inward principle of knowledge unto men, by virtue whereof they may see.

3. The commission given by Christ unto his servants to preach the gospel under the New Testament, is not restricted unto the Jews only, as it was before Christ came in the flesh, yea and after his incarnation before the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was removed by his death, Matt. x. 5; but it is extended indifferently to all nations under heaven, and to all persons without exception, as God by his providence shall open a door unto his servants to go unto them: for so is Paul's commission here to be understood, even, "to make all men see."

4. That sinners, lost by nature, may attain to fellowship and communion with the true church of God, by sharing with them in all their privileges and good things purchased by Christ, and in Christ himself, the covenant of grace, and in all the prayers, gifts, and graces of all believers through the world, is the gladdest tidings that ever sounded in their ears: for Paul having shown, ver. 8, that his office was to "preach" (or, as it is in the original, to declare good tidings) to the Gentiles, he sheweth here what those glad tidings are, even to "make them see what is the fellowship of the mystery," that is, what that fellowship is, which they were now admitted unto with the true church of God in all her privileges, and formerly was an hid secret.

5. The written word of God is such a depth, that the quickest wits cannot find the bottom of it; there being many things contained in it, at least by just consequence, which even they who have their senses exercised in it cannot thoroughly discern or collect from it: for even this

mystery, that the Gentiles should have fellowship with the church, without entering by the door of circumcision, was revealed, though obscurely, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as Paul doth gather by consequence from the time of Abraham's circumcision, Rom. iv. 10, 11, and from Melchisedec's priesthood, Heb. vii. 11; and yet, saith the apostle, "this was a mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." So that even the prophets did not fully understand it, nor the apostles themselves until it was more clearly revealed, Acts x. 10.

6. Jesus Christ is true God, equal with the Father in power and glory, having an eternal being before the world was made: for the Father "created all things by Jesus Christ," to wit, not as by one instrument, but as one working with him, and from him, Heb. i. 2, John i. 3.

7. Though the grace of redemption be not of equal extent with the work of creation, there being many created whom God will never save, Matt. vii. 21; yet God's equal interest in all by creation, doth abundantly plead his liberty to save whom he pleaseth, and to save one as well as another, whatever a spirit of envy in some may say to the contrary: for the apostle's scope in saying God "created all things by Jesus Christ," is, to show that none could justly stumble at God's saving the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, seeing he had equal interest in both by creation.

8. The consideration of Christ's Godhead, and of his creating all things, doth contribute much to the faith and right understanding of his discharging the mediatory office, in uniting all the elect to God, and among themselves; in so far as this consideration doth hold him forth to be one fitted and enabled to do what is undertaken, and speaketh his interest in them as his creatures, and right to save them, if he please: for that Paul may further clear this purpose of uniting Jew and Gentile in one by Christ, he mentioneth God's "creating all things" by Christ as God equal with himself.

VER. 10. To the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

The apostle doth magnify his office, sixthly, from the advantage and benefit which did thereby redound unto the glorified angels, called here "principalities" and "powers," chiefly, because God maketh use of their ministry in governing the kingdoms and principalities of this world, Dan. iv. 13, 14, and x. 12, 13, and because of the force and power they have in executing the will of God, Psal. ciii. 20, and are said to be "in heavenly places," not as if they were never upon earth, Gen. xxxii. 1, but the place of their ordinary residence is in heaven, Matt. xviii. 10. Now, the apostle sheweth, that this was one end intended by God to be brought about by his preaching the gospel unto the Gentiles, even that the church, being hereby gathered of Jew and Gentile, might be as a glass, wherein these glorious creatures should behold "the manifold wisdom of God," that is, the many and signal evidences of

God's infinite wisdom manifested in the way of salvation held forth by the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 24, and in his diverse ways of dispensing grace and salvation in several ages, Heb. i. 1, (the doctrine of salvation remaining always the same for substance, Heb. xiii. 8,) and more especially as to the present purpose, in his receiving the formerly profane and idolatrous Gentiles unto fellowship and society with his church, having abolished circumcision and the rest of those levitical ordinances; which is the main subject of all that precedeth this verse in this chapter.

DOCTRINES.

1. The glory of free grace, mercy, wisdom, and of other divine attributes, which God intendeth in the salvation of sinners, is such a rent as he will have paid, not only by men, but also by the glorified angels: for Paul maketh this one end, why God gave him the gospel to preach, even that angels might therein see God's glory made manifest, and might acknowledge it accordingly; "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers," &c.

2. It is the duty of Christ's ministers to commend and magnify their office, not for gaining praise and esteem to themselves, 2 Cor. iii. 1, but that the malice of Satan and his instruments may be hereby frustrated, 2 Cor. xi. 12, who labour to bring that sacred calling unto contempt; that so it may have the less of success upon people's hearts, 2 Tim. iii. 8; for therefore is it that Paul doth so much magnify his office in this and the preceding verses; "To the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers," &c.

3. This may commend the ministers of the gospel not a little unto men, and beget reverence in them towards the same, that even the blessed angels are in some sort bettered by it, and that it is therefore respected by them: for Paul commendeth his office from this, that by occasion thereof "unto the principalities and powers, was made known the manifold wisdom of God."

4. Though angels be most knowing creatures, as enjoying the immediate sight and presence of God, Matt. xviii. 10, yet they are ignorant of some things, which, by God's way of dispensing the gospel to his church, they come to a more full knowledge of: and therefore, though their present state of happiness doth give them full satisfaction for the time, yet it is capable of some addition, and to be perfected fully at the last day, even as the torments of the fallen angels shall then, and not while [until] then be complete, 2 Pet. ii. 4; for Paul sheweth that "by the church was made known the manifold wisdom of God."

5. Neither the souls of just men made perfect, nor glorified angels, though they enjoy the blessed sight of God, do yet by virtue thereof come to the knowledge of every thing which God himself doth know; and therefore it is without ground affirmed by papists, that by this mean they know the prayers which are uttered here on earth: for the apostle sheweth that even the blessed angels are ignorant of some things, until "by the church was made known unto them the manifold wisdom of God."

6. Though the wise and eternal counsel of God for bringing lost sinners to glory, be one and the

same, and wholly unchangeable, Psa. xxxiii. 11, and though the way condescended upon in that his eternal counsel, by which sinners shall be saved, hath been in all ages one and the same for substance, to wit, Jesus Christ, Heb. xiii. 8, and faith in him, Heb. xi. 2; yet so many and diverse are those ways, wherein he doth execute that counsel in the several ages of his church, Heb. i. 1, and all of them fitted for the age of the church, which then was, Gal. iv. 3; so unworthy, 2 Cor. iv. 7, and contrary, Phil. i. 19, are those means for the most part, whereby he worketh the end intended; so sweet an harmony and concord betwixt infinite mercy and infinite justice, doth appear in this way, each of those rejoicing over the other, and yet ceding one to another, to the full satisfaction of both, Rom. iii. 24, 26; so variously and wonderfully doth he confound the wisdom of men and devils, who would mar the salvation of the elect by making them (nill they will they) to advance it, Phil. i. 12; and generally all his way is such, that (as it evidenceth infinite wisdom in God, who hath contrived, and doth manage it; so, it containeth many evidences of that kind: for therefore is that, which the angels do learn from the way of salvation revealed to the church, and God's way of carrying on his people's salvation, called "the manifold wisdom of God."

7. Then do we learn the knowledge of Scripture, and observe God's way of dealing in carrying on our own salvation and the salvation of others aright, when we observe in God's word or works his manifold wisdom, or some evident proofs of his other attributes: for this was it which the angels did learn from God's mind revealed in Scripture, and his way of dealing with the church, even "the manifold wisdom of God."

VER. 11. According to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

He magnifieth his office, seventhly, by showing, first, that the making manifest this manifold wisdom of God, in the dispensation of grace both to Jew and Gentiles by his ministry, was a thing which God (who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, chap. i. 11) had resolved upon and purposed, not of yesterday, but from all eternity; though, for wise reasons, he did reserve the making of so much known until the times of the gospel. Next, that this eternal purpose was purposed in Christ, to wit, not only as he was God, equal with, and the eternal wisdom of the Father, and so did join with him in all his decrees and purposes; but also as Mediator, God-man, by whom the Father was to effectuate and execute all his purposes for good towards the church. See upon chap. i. ver. 4; for the word rendered "purposed," may be also rendered, "he made," or, "did execute in Christ."

DOCTRINES.

1. This may commend the ministry of the gospel, and gain respect unto it, that the plot and draft of man's salvation dispensed thereby, is founded upon the wise and eternal counsel of God; and therefore such as will endure all the

contradictions of sinners, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; yea, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matt. vii. 24, 25, and self-condemned sinners may safely venture their salvation upon, Matt. xi. 28, for Paul doth magnify his office from this, that the message which he carried, was "according to God's eternal purpose."

2. This may also, upon the same grounds, commend the ministry of the gospel much, that Jesus Christ, being chosen by the Father for that end, hath taken on and doth daily execute his mediatory office for bringing about the salvation of the elect, according to the plot condescended upon in God's eternal purpose, and dispensed by the ministry of the gospel; for Paul commendeth his ministry from this, that God had "purposed," and resolved upon that draft of salvation, "in Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. As God before all time hath foreordained in his eternal purpose whatever cometh to pass in time, his works being known unto him, and accordingly resolved upon by him, before the worlds were made, Acts xv. 18; so though God's way of dealing in time with men, and more particularly with his church, doth alter, yet this inferreth not any change or alteration in his purpose, seeing every dispensation remaineth so long as he hath purposed, and every alteration falleth out according to his purpose: for, lest from what the apostle spoke of God's manifold wisdom in dispensing grace and salvation now in a way diverse from what he did formerly, any should suspect that therefore God had altered his purpose, he sheweth here all this had come to pass "according to his eternal purpose."

4. As it is but small comfort unto a minister that he is intrusted to carry unto others an excellent message and glad tidings of the plot and draft of man's salvation, surely grounded upon God's purpose, and infallibly executed by Christ in all its steps, except he make application and take a share of those glad tidings unto himself; so the way for either pastor or people to apply the gospel, and all those rich treasures of spiritual blessings contained in it, unto themselves, is by taking hold upon Christ, and pleading a well-grounded interest in him as theirs: for if Christ be ours, all things are ours, Rom. viii. 32. Hence is it that Paul, having magnified his ministry and message, doth make application of those precious things which he was intrusted with unto himself, by pleading an interest in Christ as his, while he calleth him "Jesus Christ our Lord."

VER. 12. In whom we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of him.

He doth magnify his office, eighthly, from three excellent privileges, whereof believers among them (some in a greater, some in a lesser measure, some at one time, some at another,) did partake by the means of his ministry; as being thereby brought to Christ, in whom they enjoyed all these. First, "boldness," or liberty to speak all their mind freely, (as the original word doth bear,) whereby, as it is distinguished from the other two, is meant that holy freedom and boldness which is in reconciled souls to speak

their whole heart to God, both in the duty of prayer and thanksgiving; and is opposed to misbelief, terror of conscience, or to whatsoever doth straiten the heart or stop the mouth in discharging these duties. Secondly, "access," to wit, unto God, (see chap. ii. 18,) which is larger than the former, as comprehending freedom and liberty of spirit in reconciled souls to exercise all their saving graces, in the exercise whereof communion with God doth consist. Thirdly, "confidence," or a well-grounded persuasion that both our persons and performances are accepted of God. All which privileges he sheweth were enjoyed by them by virtue of their being in Christ, of whom he spoke, ver. 11, and by the exercise of faith relying upon him.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whatsoever worldly disadvantage may follow upon the preaching of the gospel unto a people, Matt. x. 34, 35, yet those excellent and spiritual privileges which are conveyed thereby unto them who receive the gospel, may and ought sufficiently to commend the ministry of it unto all; for Paul doth here commend his office from these spiritual fruits which were enjoyed by it, as their being "in Christ, in whom they had boldness and access with confidence."

2. And more particularly, liberty and freedom to speak our heart to God in all our concerns, and access to God, or fellowship with him in the exercise of all our graces, (all obstructions arising either from the apprehension of God's terror and our own guiltiness, or from our inability, backwardness of spirit to do good, or from those impediments which the devil, the world, or our own hearts do create and cast in our way, being removed,) those, I say, together with confidence, and a well-grounded persuasion that both our persons and duties are accepted of by God, may and will abundantly serve to commend the ministry of the gospel unto those who have found it accompanied with such effects to their own hearts, whatever other troubles they may be under for their receiving of it: for the apostle commendeth his ministry from their enjoying of those privileges in particular by the means thereof: "In whom we have boldness," &c.

3. The more a Christian doth find his heart enlarged, and his tongue loosed to speak unto God in the duties of prayer and praise, he will find the more of access unto, and of fellowship with God, in the exercise of all his saving graces; and the more a man be restrained of liberty in those duties, he will readily find himself the more restrained from the exercise of faith, hope, patience, humility, meekness, or any other of his saving graces: for the apostle conjoineth "boldness," or liberty in prayer and praises, with "access," or freedom of spirit to approach unto God in the exercise of saving graces; "In whom we have boldness and access."

4. A well-grounded persuasion of our acceptation with God, both as to our persons and actions, doth serve exceedingly to furnish the heart with boldness in prayer, and with familiar access unto and fellowship with God; in so far as many of those obstructions which mar boldness and access

do arise from diffidence, misbelieving doubts, or ignorance whether God accepteth of us or not, Rom. x. 14; for the apostle speaketh of "confidence," or of this well-grounded persuasion, as having some influence upon the other two, while he saith, "boldness and access with confidence."

5. Those excellent privileges of boldness, access and confidence, are not only purchased and conveyed unto sinners by Christ, (as was explained in the point of access, chap. ii. 18, Doct. 2.) but also they are enjoyed by none but such as are in Christ, and united to him by a lively and saving faith: and all who are not so in Christ, are estranged from spiritual liberty and boldness in prayer, though they be never so much flowing in eloquence and discourse. They are estranged also from access unto God, being banished from his favour and presence, Psal. lvi. 3, and have no well-grounded confidence that God doth accept either of their persons or actions, seeing he is well pleased only in him, Matt. iii. 17: for he saith, "In whom," meaning Christ, "we have boldness and access with confidence:" they were first in him.

6. Faith in Jesus Christ (whereby we receive, John i. 12, and rest upon him for salvation, Isa. i. 10,) is one thing, and confidence, or persuasion of our acceptance with God, is another; the former being the cause, root, and fountain of the latter: for Paul sheweth that confidence floweth from faith, while he saith, "with confidence by the faith of him," or faith in him. See Gal. ii. 20.

7. As faith in Jesus Christ is that grace which uniteth us to him, so it not only goeth before our boldness, access, and confidence, but also maketh way for and is the cause of those; and therefore the more that faith is kept in exercise, there will be the more of liberty and boldness, the more of access to God and nearness, and the more of a well-grounded persuasion of our acceptance by God, and confidence: for he ascribeth their being in Christ, their access, boldness, and confidence, unto faith, while he saith, "by the faith of him."

VER. 13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

The apostle having now sufficiently magnified his office, doth here, in the third branch of this first part of the chapter, hold forth his main scope in all he hath spoken from ver. 2, in an exhortation to courage, or a dissuasive from fainting and discouragement in their Christian course, notwithstanding of his present sad sufferings, who had preached the gospel among them. Which dissuasive, as it is most humbly and affectionately propounded, (for the word rendered "desire," signifieth "humbly to beg and intreat," Acts iii. 2, and xii. 20,) so it is most vehemently urged from three reasons. First, Because of the worth and dignity of his apostolic office, spoken of in the preceding verses, and related unto here, as one reason of the present dissuasive, in the illative particle "wherefore." Secondly, All his tribulations were in a special manner for them; to wit, not only for their confirmation and example, but

mainly because they were occasioned by his publicly asserting the privileges of the Gentiles by faith in Christ without circumcision, Acts xxii. 21, 22. And, thirdly, they were not only profitable unto them in the former respects, but also glorious and honourable, in so far as God did herein show how much he esteemed of them, by sending his apostles not only to preach unto them, but also to confirm the gospel by their sufferings; and that hereby the glorious privileges of the Gentiles, as to their interest in Christ, and all the blessings of the covenant of grace were asserted and confirmed, in despite of the desperate rage and fury of the Jews, Phil. ii. 17.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is an ordinary evil, incident to those who have once made swift progress in their Christian course, to faint and relent in it, so as to give way unto lukewarmness and coldriveness, instead of their former zeal and fervency, Rev. ii. 4; to security and laziness, instead of former watchfulness and diligence, Gal. v. 7; to drooping discouragement and backwardness, instead of former courage and cheerfulness, Heb. xii. 12: for this is the evil of fainting which Paul did look upon as incident to those Ephesians, and therefore dissuadeth from it; "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not."

2. As tribulation for the gospel, whether imminent or already lying on, doth usually make those faint and turn remiss in their Christian course, who have not timeously forecast trouble before it came, Mark iv. 17; so when trouble and persecution befall the ministers of Christ, especially those who are primarily instrumental in the work of the Gospel, then are the Lord's people most apt to faint and be discouraged; because that therein they do frequently with great anxiety and diffidence forecast irreparable detriment to the work of God, as if God could not find out other hands to carry on his work, when such and such are laid aside: for Paul foresaw that his tribulation (who having been such an eminent instrument in the work of the gospel, did now every day expect death at Rome) would occasion their fainting, and therefore he doth guard against it; "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulation."

3. Affliction and tribulation for the gospel is a trial not only to those who are under it, but to others also who look on, and are in no less hazard to be thereby brangled in their confidence, blunted in their zeal, and rendered remiss in their former forwardness, than the person himself who suffereth; for Paul is more afraid of their fainting because of his trouble, than of his own; and therefore doth carefully guard against it; "I desire that ye faint not at my tribulation."

4. It is not sufficient for a faithful minister that he labour earnestly to rouse up people from their natural deadness, and once engage them in the way of Christianity, Eph. v. 14, but he must also endeavour to keep them moving, when they are so engaged, forecasting wisely, and labouring to remove carefully, what offences and stumbling-blocks Satan and corrupt flesh may cast in their way to retard them in it, or make them turn aside from it. Thus Paul wisely foreseeeth and

carefully laboureth to remove that ground of stumbling and fainting which they were apt to take from his sufferings: "faint not at my tribulations."

5. A faithful minister suffering for truth, will not be so solicitous for his own concerns relating to his outward estate, as for the church and people of God, lest they be turned aside, or made to faint by reason of his sufferings: for Paul doth not so much desire that they would furnish him with things necessary in the prison, or use means for his delivery from it, as that they "faint not at his tribulations."

6. It is not sufficient that ministers exonerate themselves simply in holding forth to people their duty, unless they be vehemently serious in pressing upon them the practice of it, and this especially in hard declining times, wherein the dead and lukewarm affections of people use not to be easily wrought upon; for Paul doth affectionately "desire," or humbly beg of them (as the word signifieth) "that they would not faint."

7. This may sufficiently guard the Lord's people from discouragement, stumbling, and heartless fainting, notwithstanding the sad suffering lot which is sometimes measured out unto the Lord's faithful servants for the truth's cause, when they consider the excellent worth of truth, and how those, who suffer for it, have not cast themselves without necessity upon their sufferings, but were necessitated to meet with them in the way of their calling; for from what Paul hath said formerly, from ver. 2, of his calling to preach the gospel among the Gentiles, and the worth of that message which he did carry, and was the occasion of his sufferings, he inferreth this dissuasive, "Wherefore, I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations."

8. This may in reason prevent the fainting and stumbling of the Lord's people at the contempt, reproach, and other hardships, under which they who preach the gospel do for the most part labour, if they would seriously consider that all those sufferings are occasioned in a great part by them, in so far as if it were not for respect to the souls of people, ministers might do much to shift the cross as well as others; for Paul laboureth to prevent their fainting and stumbings at his sufferings from that consideration; "faint not at my tribulations, which are for you," saith he; implying, if he had not preached the gospel unto the Gentiles, he might have been free from trouble.

9. So honourable is it to suffer for Christ and truth, that not only the persons themselves who suffer are thereby honoured, Acts v. 41, but also all such as have interest in them; and especially the sufferings of a faithful minister are glorious and honourable unto his flock, as testifying God's high esteem of them in sending his servants to suffer for their good, which ought in reason to prevent their fainting at his sufferings, yea, and make them glory in them, and take encouragement from them; for Paul sheweth "his tribulation was their glory," and therefore desireth them not to faint.

VER. 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

The apostle doth now follow forth the second part of the chapter, which was begun, ver. 1, and interrupted by a digression until this verse, for such reason as was given, ver. 2. And in this part of the chapter, (while he giveth a sum of his fervent prayers to God for them, that they might persevere and grow in the faith and experimental knowledge of the doctrine of salvation delivered by them,) he doth not only give an evident testimony of his sincere affection and endeavour after their salvation, but also laboureth hereby to beget the like ardency of affection in them, and so doth, (indirectly at least, though most pithily,) by the example of his prayers, excite them to persevere and make progress in the experimental knowledge of and communion with Jesus Christ.

In this prayer there is, first, a preface to those verses, wherein he doth, 1. Repeat the occasion of his prayer, which was mentioned ver. 1, and doth relate, as I there show, unto the close of chap. ii., even because "they were already builded by faith upon Christ." 2. He denominateth his prayer from the outward gesture he used therein, "bowing of the knee," thereby expressing the humble, reverend frame of his heart in prayer. And, 3. He sheweth unto whom he did pray, to wit, God the Father, described, first, from his relation to Jesus Christ, as chap. i. ver. 17. This is the sum of ver. 14. Secondly, from his relation to his church, as being the Father, by adoption, of the whole church of the truly regenerate, whether triumphant in heaven or militant upon earth, whether Jew or Gentile, which is here called a "family," and said to have its name from God, as being his family, children, domestics of his household, and that both in name and thing, the one whereof is not to be separated from the other, seeing God bestoweth not empty names and titles upon any. Now God is thus described with relation to the purpose in hand, for hereby the apostle breaketh down the arrogance of the Jews, who would have had the whole church denominated from and contained within the Jewish nation, excluding the Gentiles, whom therefore Paul doth upon all occasions make equal sharers of an interest in God through Christ with the Jews, and thereby sheweth his warrant to pray for perseverance and growth in grace from God, even to them.

From ver. 14, learn, 1. It is the duty of Christ's ministers, as to teach and admonish the people of God committed to their charge, 2 Tim. iv. 2, so also to pray to God for them, and that not only in public with them, as being the mouth of the people unto God, Joel ii. 27, but also in private to the Lord for them, seeing their own pains cannot profit without the Lord's blessing, 1 Cor. iii. 6, which ministers ought fervently to seek from God by prayer, else they have not ground to expect it, Ezek. xxxvi. 37; for Paul, as he taught these Ephesians, so he prayed for them, and that not only in public, but also in private, as he here sheweth; "For this cause I bow my knees."

2. It is no small advantage unto the Lord's

people to have such a minister as is able to pray, and accordingly doth pray pertinently, spiritually, and fervently with them and for them, by whom, as by their mouth, they may have their several cases made known unto God more distinctly than can be expressed by many of themselves, Joel ii. 17, and they themselves are edified and instructed how to pray with the like affection and fervency, 1 Cor. xiv. 19; by whose affectionate prayers unto God for them, a blessing is drawn down from Heaven to make the word preached effectual in them, James v. 16, and they themselves incited and roused up to seek after those good things prayed for unto them: hereby also they are comforted and encouraged, as knowing their minister is speaking to God for them when he is absent from them, and cannot speak unto them, Phil. i. 4, and when they, through some one distemper or other, cannot deal with God for themselves, at least in any measure satisfactory to themselves, James v. 14, 15; for as Paul's exhortation and doctrine was advantageous unto those Ephesians, so also were his fervent prayers in order to their being kept from fainting, and to their up-stirring to endeavour after those good things which he sought from God unto them, and therefore doth he mention his praying for them in this place; "For this cause I bow my knees."

3. From the apostle's scope in making known unto them what and how he prayed for them, see a further note, chap. i. ver. 17, Doct. 1, "I bow my knees."

4. Our prayers unto God for others, especially the prayers of a minister for his flock, should take their rise not only from their wants, afflictions, and sinful infirmities, James v. 14, 15, but also from the grace and good things of God already received by them, that they may persevere and grow in them, and be preserved from abusing them, seeing the graces of the best are but imperfect, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, subject to decay, Rev. iii. 2, and may be abused, 2 Cor. xii. 7; for the apostle taketh occasion to pray for these Ephesians from the good already received by them, even their being builded already upon Christ, mentioned chap. ii. ver. 22, unto which the words, "for this cause," do relate.

5. Though we be not tied by a divine precept or scripture example unto any one gesture in prayer, seeing the saints have used several gestures, according to the present frame of their heart thereby expressed, 1 Kings viii. 22, 2 Sam. xii. 16, Luke xviii. 13, 2 Sam. vii. 18, and though God be a Spirit who will be worshipped in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24, and careth not for the outward man alone, Matt. xv. 7, 8; yet seeing God craveth service both from the soul and body, as having created and redeemed both, 1 Cor. vi. 20, and seeing an outward reverend gesture of the body in prayer, doth not only express and natively flow from a reverend frame of spirit within, from which the body is acted in other things, but also serveth to stir up the affections in prayer, as being a man's remembrance what his heart ought to do, if he would not play the gross hypocrite with God, therefore it is a thing needful and convenient (if we be not otherwise restrained, Neh. ii. 5,) to use some reverend

gesture of the body while we are about the duty of prayer; for Paul did kneel in prayer; "I bow my knees," saith he.

6. We ought, especially in prayer, to draw near to God with deep reverence unto and high esteem of the majesty of God, being joined with low and mean thoughts of ourselves, because of our baseness and unworthiness, seeing God honoureth them who honour him, 1 Sam. ii. 30, and giveth grace unto the humble, James iv. 6; for Paul did evidence such a frame of heart by "bowing his knees" when he prayed.

7. Deep reverence of heart towards the sacred majesty of God in prayer, may well consist with faith and confident approaching unto God, as a reconciled Father. Both of them ought to be joined together in prayer; yea, and both, when they are sincere and not counterfeit, do mutually strengthen and intend one another, so that the more we put our trust in him, the more will our hearts fear and adore him, Psal. cxxx. 4; for the apostle exercised not only reverence in his prayer, as is already shown, but also confidence, while he taketh up God as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and of the whole family of believers through him.

8. See further concerning this title given to God with relation to Christ, upon chap. i. ver. 3, in the exposition, and Doct. 2, and ver. 17, Doct. 3, 5, 6, "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

From ver. 15, learn, 1. As there is but one church universal, comprehending all the elect in all times and places, whether in heaven or earth, so all within the church are of one kindred and lineage, descending of one common father; for he designeth the church to be "one whole family in heaven and earth:" the word signifieth such a family as is the lineage of one man.

2. As this one church is God's family and household, (see chap. ii. ver. 19, Doct. 8.) so all the members of his church and family are comprehended either in heaven or earth. Scripture knoweth nothing of a purgatory, or third place different from these; for the apostle sheweth this "whole family is in heaven and earth," and "named of God."

3. Those near relations under which God doth stand towards his church, are founded upon Jesus Christ; and all the benefits flowing from such relations, are conveyed unto the church through him, without whom God is a consuming fire to sinners, and in whom he is a reconciled Father unto believers; for the apostle looketh upon God, first, as he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and next, as he is the Father of all the elect; "Of whom the whole family is named," to wit, his children, John i. 12, and domestics, Eph. ii. 19.

4. The near relation which God hath to his church, and his church to him, is sufficient ground and warrant for faith to rest upon him, and plead with him for supply and furniture of all grace, and of every thing needful; for shall not he provide for his own children, who hath pronounced those among men to be worse than infidels, who provide not for theirs? 1 Tim. v. 8. Hence the apostle maketh this a ground of his confidence, to be answered by God in what he

sought in behalf of those Ephesians, even God's fatherly interest in them; "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

VER. 16. That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner man;

The apostle doth, secondly, particularise those petitions which he put up to God in his prayer; and they are four. The first whereof is in this verse, to wit, that God, from the fountain of that inexhaustible treasure of his divine attributes, (called "his glory," Exod. xxxiii. 18, with xxxiv. 6, 7,) and especially of his mercy and power, (which are set forth by the name and epithet of "his glory," or "glorious," Eph. i. 6, Col. i. 11,) would furnish them with a daily increase of spiritual strength, whereby they might resist the devil and all spiritual adversaries in their Christian course, chap. vi. 12, which strength was to be wrought by the Holy Spirit in their "inward man," whereby, as 2 Cor. iv. 16, is meant the soul, (not simply in itself, but as living the life of grace,) and those things which relate to that spiritual life; as the outward man doth comprehend all those things belonging to a man's outward estate, so, in a word, he prayeth that they may be strong and flourish in all things which relate to the spiritual estate of their eternal souls.

DOCTRINES.

1. From the apostle his being able to give an after account of what he prayed for, see chap. i. ver. 17, Doct. 2, "that he would grant unto you."

2. Whatever strength or natural parts of body or mind men naturally have to compass their affairs of this world, Gen. iv. 20—22, yet they are wholly destitute of all spiritual strength and activity for compassing heaven and happiness, and for walking in the way of holiness which leadeth to it; for the apostle findeth an inlack [deficiency] of this strength even in the converted Ephesians, and therefore doth seek it from God unto them, much more must it be wholly wanting in those who are not yet converted; "That he would grant unto you to be strengthened in the inward man."

3. Though there be a new principle of spiritual strength wrought in those who are renewed at their first conversion, Jer. xxxi. 33, whereby the renewed heart, being wrought upon by the Spirit of God, doth really work that which is spiritually good, Phil. iv. 13, yet a constantly renewed supply of grace and strength from the Spirit of God, is necessary even to the renewed man, whereby those seeds of grace already wrought in him may be upheld in their being, Jer. xxxii. 40, preserved against the furious assaults of raging temptations, Luke xxii. 32, actuated and made to do that which is truly good, Phil. ii. 13, and much more, that hereby grace begun in conversion, may be made to grow and advance towards perfection, Phil. i. 6; for the apostle prayeth even for those converted Ephesians, that

"they may be strengthened with might in the inward man."

4. Such is the vanity, lightness, and inconsistency of our hearts in good, Psal. xxxix. 5, our impotency to resist temptations, Matt. xxvi. 34, our proneness to turn from the ways of God, Gal. v. 7, so strong, so subtle, so assiduous are our spiritual adversaries, Eph. vi. 12, so many are those difficulties, discouragements, diversions, and hinderances, which we have to wrestle with and overcome in the way to heaven, Acts xiv. 22, that except we be underpropped and strengthened by God's almighty power, we cannot stand one moment, and much less advance in our Christian course; for therefore doth Paul pray that "they might be strengthened with might in the inward man."

5. Even the regenerate children of God, in seeking increase of strength and of more grace from God, must not, if so they would obtain their suit, plead from their merit, or any good use they have made of their former grace, seeing upon a strict account it will be found that grace hath not been so improved by the best as it ought, Isa. lxiv. 6. But they must seek what they so expect as a gift from God's free grace, without any respect had to their own worth; for the apostle, while he seeketh increase of spiritual strength unto those converted Ephesians, he prayeth that "God would grant," or give it as a gift, (for the word signifieth so much,) and that from the inexhaustible fountain of his glorious grace; "That he would grant unto you according to the riches of his glory," not according to your worth.

6. As all the attributes of God, and especially his mercy and power, are not only altogether glorious, because the glory of God is manifested unto the creatures in their several wonderful effects, Psal. xix. 1, &c., but are also infinite, and without measure, as being indefatigable in working, wholly insuperable by any impediment or opposition whatsoever, and inexhaustible by supplying any want in the creature; so in making our approaches unto God for seeking any good, and especially saving good, it is most necessary that we lift our eyes above any thing that is ours, whether our good, or our evil, and fasten them by faith upon that inexhaustible fountain of mercy and power in God, whereby he is not only willing as merciful, but also able as omnipotent, to bestow whatever we shall ask according to his will; for the apostle, in seeking spiritual strength for those Ephesians, doth look to the inexhaustible riches of God's mercy and power, called here his glory; "that he would grant according to the riches of his grace."

7. It is the Spirit of God, the third person in the blessed Trinity, who, taking up his place of abode in the truly regenerate, 1 John iv. 13, doth make it his work to renew their strength by upholding and actuating their graces, and making them advance from strength to strength in despite of all imaginable difficulties; neither is there any other strength or might, whether natural or acquired, which can sufficiently furnish us to rancounter all those difficulties, which are incident in our Christian course, but that whereof the Spirit of God residing in us is the author and

giver: for he prayeth "they may be strengthened with might in the inward man from the Spirit."

8. Though Christians are not to neglect their outward and bodily concerns, 1 Tim. v. 8, 23, yet the spiritual estate of their eternal souls is to be cared for most, and so much as if it go well with that, and if the soul be strengthened with might for carrying on the concerns thereof, their outward concerns may trouble them the less: and especially the care of ministers should be employed about the inward and spiritual estate of their flock; for Paul prayeth they may be "strengthened in the inner man," his care did run most upon that.

VER. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith—

Here is the second petition of the apostle's prayer, wherein he seeketh that which is the cause of strengthening and corroboration by the Spirit, spoken of ver. 16; even that Jesus Christ, by virtue of a continued act of lively faith in him, might be perpetually present in his virtue, grace, and spirit, working not only in their tongues and brains, but also, and mainly, in their hearts.

DOCTRINES.

1. That we may partake of any saving benefit purchased by Christ, and particularly, that we may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man for doing any thing that is spiritually good, it is most necessary that we partake first of Christ himself, being most strictly united to him, and even as the members are to the head, from which they receive sense and motion. Christ giveth nothing of his purchase unto any, but whom he giveth himself first, 1 John v. 11, 12, and to whomsoever he giveth himself, upon those he bestoweth all things: Christ in us being the hope of glory, Col. i. 27; the fountain of life, Gal. ii. 20; and of all things needful, 1 John iv. 4; for Paul, having prayed that they may be strengthened with might in the inner man, subjoineth the way and manner how this strength was to be conveyed unto them, even by "Christ's dwelling in their hearts by faith."

2. There is a strict conjunction and near familiarity between Christ and believers, even such, in some sort, as is between an indweller and the house wherein he dwelleth, whereby Jesus Christ, God and man in one person, is present with the believer, not in his substance only, as he is God; for so he is every where, Jer. xxiii. 24; nor in his substance at all, as he is man; for so the heavens do contain him, Acts iii. 21; but by his gracious operation and special influence upon them, whereby he quickeneth them, Rom. viii. 10, ruleth them, Acts ix. 6, and liveth in them, Gal. ii. 20; for he prayeth that "Christ may dwell in their hearts," which petition is granted, in behalf of all believers, seeing he prayed in faith.

3. Though Christ doth thus familiarly communicate himself unto all believers, so as to dwell in them by his gracious presence; yet not unto

all alike, but unto some in a larger measure than unto others, according as he worketh more and more effectually in some than in others; for though Christ did already dwell in those converted Ephesians, chap. ii. 22, yet Paul doth pray that "Christ may dwell in them," which therefore must be understood of a greater measure and degree of his indwelling presence than formerly they had.

4. Where Jesus Christ doth once take up his abode and dwelling in the heart, there he remaineth constantly and flitteth not; in so far as though sometimes he withholdeth that gracious influence of his, which is necessary only to the well-being, flourishing, and vigorous thriving of grace in the heart, Cant. v. 6; yet he never withdraweth that influence which is necessary to the being of grace, and without which grace would utterly die and perish, Psal. lxxiii. 23; for the word rendered to dwell, signifieth to take up a fixed and immoveable habitation, and differeth from another word very like unto it, which signifieth to sojourn in a place only for a season, 1 Pet. i. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts."

5. Though even the bodies of believers be temples of the Holy Ghost, and consequently of Jesus Christ; for Christ dwelleth in them by his Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 19; yet the heart, will, and affections of man, are the chief place of his habitation, wherein he resideth as in his strong citadel, from which he commandeth the other faculties and members. And without his presence there, he cannot have any habitation in any part of the man elsewhere; the tongue cannot receive him by speaking, nor the understanding by knowing, nor the hand by external working, except he be received in the heart, from which proceed the issues of life, Prov. iv. 23; for he prayeth that "Christ may dwell in their hearts."

6. Though Jesus Christ doth make his first entry unto, and dwelleth in believers by his Spirit, 1 John iv. 13, whereby he uniteth them to himself, quickeneth and ruleth them, yea, and worketh the grace of faith in them, John vi. 44; yet faith being so wrought, the believer doth thereby lay hold on Christ, Phil. iii. 12; giveth him daily employment, John xv. 5, and Christ being so laid hold upon and employed, remaineth and resideth in the believer; for therefore is it that he ascribeth this indwelling of Christ in the heart unto faith; "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

7. Such is the power and virtue of faith; that those things which are at furthest distance, whether in respect of time, John viii. 56, or of place, are present to it, and to the heart by it. Even as those things are present to the eye and ear, which are clearly seen and distinctly heard, though in respect of place they may be many miles distant; so whole Christ, both as God and man, is present to the heart in his merit, virtue, and efficacy, laid hold upon by faith, though his human nature be locally present in heaven only, Acts iii. 21; and therefore there is no necessity, in order to our spiritual life, that his body be present in the sacrament, and received by the mouth and stomach: for he is conveyed unto, and

"dwelleth in the heart by faith," besides that the flesh profiteth nothing, John vi. 63.

VER. 17. That ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,

The third petition followeth, wherein the thing prayed for, is an excellent effect of that spiritual corroboration, flowing from Christ's dwelling in them by faith, spoken of ver. 16, 17, even that God would make them grow in knowledge, especially in the experimental knowledge of his love in Christ. And first, he setteth down the means of attaining the thing prayed for, to wit, their firm and sure laying hold upon, and adhering to the love and free grace of God in Christ, as it is revealed in the gospel, by the grace of faith, as trees are firmly fastened in the ground by their roots, and edifices are built, and lean upon their strong foundations; for the two words "rooted" and "grounded," are metaphors taken from trees and edifices, ver. 17. Secondly, the request itself, first proposed more obscurely, to wit, that they might "be able to comprehend," or certainly to understand what that love of God in Christ is, whereof he hath presently spoken, and is to speak immediately afterwards; and therefore it is most agreeable to the present purpose, that it be here understood as the thing which he would have them able to comprehend in its infinite greatness and full perfection, according to all its dimensions, as of breadth, whereby it is extended unto all ages, Matt. xxviii. 20, and all ranks, 1 Tim. ii. 4, of length, whereby it reacheth from eternity to eternity, Psa. ciii. 17, of depth, whereby it stoopeth down to the lowest depths of sin and misery, and draweth sinners from thence, Psa. lxxxvi. 13, and of height, whereby it reacheth up to heavenly joys and happiness, and carrieth sinners up thither, John xiv. 9, which are the four usual dimensions and measures, according to which we ordinarily take up the bigness of greatest bodies. And withal, he sheweth that this comprehension, or uptaking of God's love here prayed for, was in part attained, and in its full measure attainable after time by all real saints and sound believers; that hereby those Ephesians might be more animated and incited to aspire unto it, ver. 18. Secondly, the request is proposed more plainly, to wit, that they might know in some measure, and chiefly from their own experience, this love, which is here called "the love of Christ," not to seclude the love of the Father, or Holy Ghost; but because the love of the whole Trinity is conveyed in the effects thereof towards lost sinners through Christ and his merit, John iii. 16, and concerning this love he affirmeth, that it "doth pass knowledge," or created understanding to know it, to wit, fully, and in its utmost extent, seeing it is infinite, as God himself is infinite, ver. 19.

From ver. 17, learn, 1. As trees cannot long

stand against the blasts of boisterous winds, except their roots be deeply fastened in some good ground, and as houses cannot remain long firm and strong, except they be built upon some sure foundation; so neither can professors hold out for any space of time against the furious assaults of many violent temptations, except they be under-dropped by, and rely upon some strong foundation; for the apostle, expressing that stability and constancy arising from the faith of God's love, which he wished for to those Ephesians, by two metaphors taken from trees deeply rooted, and houses strongly built, doth imply, that without the faith of this love, they were as trees without a root, and houses without a foundation; "that ye being rooted and grounded in love."

2. The only sure foundation, whereon the soul being built and fastened, is able to stand out against the strongest blasts of most violent temptations, is the unchangeable and free love of God in Christ revealed in the gospel, and laid hold upon by faith; and no conceit of our own righteousness, natural courage, fixed resolutions, or such like, Matt. xxvi. 33, with 70; for the apostle would have them "rooted and grounded in love," to wit, the love of God in Christ.

3. As this love of God in Jesus Christ, is a most firm rock, and sure foundation in itself; so it concerneth those who would be sustained by it against the furious assaults of Satan's temptations from all hands, to be firmly fastened in, and built upon it: which is then done, when they do not rest upon the notional knowledge thereof in the brain, so as to be able pertinently to discourse of it: but when this marvellous love, and all the good things prepared by it, are laid hold upon by faith as they are offered; and this not faintly, but seriously, as we would grip to a thing upon life and death, 1 Tim. i. 15; for Paul would have them firmly fastened in, and built upon God's love, as trees are rooted in the ground, and houses are joined with their foundations. And the mean whereby they were to be so rooted and grounded in God's love, is the grace of faith, as appeareth from a parallel place, Col. ii. 7. "That ye being rooted and grounded in love."

From ver. 18, learn, 1. As they who have found the saving effects of God's love in Christ, and consequently cannot but know something of it, do yet know but a small portion thereof; so the knowledge, and chiefly the experimental knowledge of this abounding and marvellous love, from the felt and known effects thereof, is of great concernment unto believers, and ought to be sought after by them accordingly: for this knowledge is not only pleasant, as being of a subject wonderful, but also edifying, both in order to our comfort, Rom. v. 2, with 5, and to our incitement unto duty, 2 Cor. v. 14; for he prayeth for a greater measure of this knowledge, even to those converted Ephesians, who had somewhat of it already; "That ye may be able to comprehend what is the breadth," &c.

2. Our embracing by faith the love of God in Christ, and those good things prepared by it, as they are revealed and offered in the gospel, is a necessary mean for attaining to fuller insight in the admirable nature of this love: yea, and to the sense and feeling of it, and experimental

knowledge flowing thence: for he permits their being rooted in the faith of this love, ver. 17, as a mean for attaining the more full understanding and especially the experimental knowledge of it; "That ye being rooted—may be able to comprehend."

3. This love of God in Jesus Christ to lost sinners, is so large, Isa. lv. 8, 9, so free, Hos. xiv. 4, and in all respects so wonderful, Psa. xxxi. 19. So narrow are hearts to take it up, and so strange are the ways of conveying the effects and fruits of this love through a wilderness of trial and humiliation going before, Deut. viii. 14—16, that though it be revealed in the gospel, John iii. 16, yet no man can attain to know it so, as certainly to believe the reality of it, except it be given unto him graciously of God; and therefore prayer to God would be joined with the use of other means for attaining to it; for Paul doth pray to God that they may be able to comprehend, or certainly to understand and know what is the breadth.

4. We are not to content ourselves with a superficial view of God's free love in Christ; but ought to take most accurate inspection of it in all its dimensions, and in all those several respects and ways wherein it is manifested, endeavouring at least to know it so far, as that which is infinite may be known by finite creatures, and to know it in its outmost capacity, as reaching beyond all created understanding, upward, downward, to the right hand, and to the left; that so we may be the more constrained to our duty by it; more ravished with the thoughts of it, and may draw more solid comfort from it. All which profitable effects are obstructed by our narrow thoughts and shallow apprehensions of God's love in Christ: for he prayeth they may be able to comprehend it in all its dimensions of "breadth and length, depth and height."

5. As every real saint, and all who are inherently holy, have their allotted measure from God of the saving knowledge of God's love in Christ, and shall attain to the full knowledge thereof afterwards; so whatever privilege the Lord is pleased to bestow upon the saints in common, we ought to aspire unto it, and confidently expect to receive it from the Lord: for as he maketh this comprehension and knowledge, here spoken of, a common privilege of all saints; so he doth thereby animate and incite the Ephesians to seek and expect it from God in answer to his prayers; "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints."

6. As the love of Christ is the common treasure and allowance of all saints, whatever be their different lot in other things; so they who would clear an interest in this love, must study sanctity and holiness, as that without which no man can convincingly prove his interest in it, John xiv. 21, 23; for he maketh the comprehending of Christ's love, a privilege of those only who are saints and holy; "Ye may be able to comprehend with all saints."

From ver. 19, learn, 1. The love of God in Christ, and of Christ to lost sinners, is so rich and unsearchable, Eph. ii. 7, so vast, boundless, yea, and infinite, (see ver. 18,) so matchless, and without any parallel to equal it, whereby we

might come to the exact knowledge of it, Rom. v. 7, 8, that not only the natural man cannot understand it at all, 1 Cor. ii. 14, but even those who are truly renewed, do not take it up fully, as it is in itself, and so, as they can express those infinite and unsearchable riches which are in it: they do but know in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9; for the apostle saith, "this love of Christ passeth knowledge."

2. Though this love of Christ passeth knowledge, in the sense presently mentioned, yet every true believer should endeavour to attain, yea, and doth attain to the knowledge of it in some measure, and so far as is necessary for their salvation and comfort: for though this love is unsearchable, yea, and infinite; yet created understanding may so far comprehend it, as to know it to be infinite; and that there is not so much known, but more doth yet remain to be known of it. They may know it so, as to stand and wonder at it, as not being able perfectly to comprehend it: and they may know it thus, partly, from what the Spirit of God in Scripture, condescending to our capacity so far as is possible, doth speak of it; and partly, from those effects of this unsearchable love which they do find to be wrought in themselves by it: for the apostle prayeth "they may know this love of Christ which passeth knowledge:" hereby implying, that the knowledge thereof may be attained in some measure, and that it is our duty to seek after it.

3. The infinite and unsearchable nature of this love of God in Christ to sinners, should be so far from discouraging believers to search after the knowledge of it, that by the contrary we ought to be so much the more encouraged in that search, and this for the reasons given, ver. 8, Doct. 12; for he addeth this of its passing knowledge, as it seemeth, of purpose to provoke them so much the more to seek after the knowledge of it; "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

VER. 19. That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Here is the fourth and last petition of the apostle's prayer, wherein he prayeth for the full perfection and accomplishment of all those other things, which he sought for them in the three former, even that they might be more and more filled with all the graces of God's Spirit, until they should come to the complete fullness of grace in glory, when God shall be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28; for the original doth read, "that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God," even while [until] grace begun here be fully completed in glory hereafter: which perfection of grace to be attained in the life to come, is called the fullness of God: not as if the essence of the Deity were either in whole, or in part to be communicated unto the glorified saints, which is incommunicable unto any creature; but because it floweth immediately from that his infinite and incommunicable fullness, as streams from the fountain, 1 Cor. xv. 28, and doth consist in the full enjoying of him, 1 John iii. 2.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is a fulness and completeness in grace attainable even by believers here, to wit, such as is sufficient for their present state of travellers and warriors upon earth, though not for the state of triumphers and possessors in heaven. They may attain to be complete in Christ, as not only possessing all things by faith and hope, but being indued also with such a measure of the graces of God's Spirit, as is requisite to bear them through against, and make them gloriously victorious over, their chiefest adversaries, Col. i. 11. Such a fulness is spoken of, Rom. xv. 14, 1 Cor. i. 5, 7, and prayed for here; "That ye may be filled."

2. All the fulness, and completeness in grace attainable here, is but an emptiness, being compared with that fulness in glory, which shall be attained hereafter, called here the fulness of God, and is made mention of as the journey's end, to be aspired unto and aimed at, as a step far beyond any fulness which can be attained here; for he saith, "that ye may be filled with," or until, "all the fulness of God:" where he implieth a twofold fulness, the former attainable here, by which we advance to that other fulness in glory, which shall be enjoyed hereafter.

3. The desires and endeavours of believers after Christ and grace, should not be easily satisfied, nor stand at a stay for every attainment; but ought to be enlarged, and always advancing towards a further measure than any thing already received, even to that fulness of grace attainable here; yea, and the outmost measure of grace here, is not to be rested upon, as fully satisfying, nor any thing else, until grace be fully completed in glory hereafter: for the apostle, not being satisfied with what he hath asked already, doth here pray, "that they may be filled" even "until all the fulness of God:" and hereby teacheth them to be satisfied with no less.

4. The state of believers in heaven shall be most glorious and blessed, as being no less than, first, the enjoying of God's immediate presence by sense, not by faith or through the glass of ordinances, which shall then be laid aside, God himself being all in all, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And, secondly, the enjoying of his presence fully, and so far as finite creatures can be capable of that which is infinite, 1 John iii. 2; for this is to be "filled with the fulness of God," which shall be attained in heaven.

VER. 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

The apostle, lastly, concludeth his prayers with a heavenly strain of thanksgiving to God, whereby he laboureth, indirectly at least, to persuade them that he would be answered in those great and large petitions, which he had put up to God for them, seeing he himself was so much persuaded of it, that he breaketh forth in thanksgiving to God for it, even as if all he sought had been already granted. And therefore he doth labour to persuade them further by that opposite

description, which he giveth of God in the first part of this thanksgiving, taken from God's infinite power, whereby he is able, not only to bestow more things and greater than we can either express, by seeking them in prayer, or comprehend in our thoughts, which are oftentimes larger than can be vented by expressions; but also to bestow those greater things in a large and abundant measure. And because this of God's power, absolutely considered, had been a weak ground for faith to lean upon, seeing he is able to do many things which he doth not, Matt. xxvi. 53; therefore he giveth an instance, or proof, of this infinite power in what he had wrought in believers already, by converting, quickening, and carrying on the work of grace to some good length in them, leaving unto them to gather hence, that the same power would be forthcoming and applied unto work for them in time coming, as the exigence of their case and state should require.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the duties of prayer and thanksgiving do mutually contribute for the help one of another, (see chap. i. ver. 16, Doct. 1.) so we cannot ordinarily be fervent in prayer, but of necessity our heart will sometimes break forth in thanksgiving to God among hands, occasioned partly, by those hopes of an answer, which sometimes are in the very time of prayer suggested by God, Psal. vi. 8; partly, from the remembrance of mercies formerly bestowed, which are called to mind in prayer, as arguments to plead for our present suit, Psal. lvi. 12, 13, and partly, from that felt access to God enjoyed in prayer, Psal. lvii. 1, &c. with his gracious presence and assistance communicated to the heart, chiefly when we are discharging that duty, Psal. cxxxviii. 3; for Paul, having prayed fervently, doth find his heart constrained to break forth in a song of praise; "Now unto him that is able—be glory."

2. As we ought not only to pray, but also study what grounds of hope we may attain, for coming speed in prayer; so we should have such conceptions of God, and express them to himself by way of thanksgiving in prayer, as may furnish our hearts with grounds of confidence, that we shall be heard in what we seek: for Paul, in giving thanks to God, describeth him from this, that "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," hereby giving them ground to believe, that the former great things sought by him should be granted.

3. We ought especially to establish our hearts in the faith of God's omnipotency and power to bestow that which we seek, as a main prop for confidence in prayer, seeing it is above all doubt, that God will do whatever he is able for granting our petitions, if we seek those things which he hath promised, 1 John v. 14; and therefore usually the doubts of believers concerning God's good will to grant, are but pretences to cover their shameful and atheistical doubting about his power: for Paul, to ground their confidence in expectation of an answer, describeth God from his power, whereby "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

4. As our prayers would be well digested, and diligent consideration had of those things we are

to seek, else our prayers are but lip labour of the grossest sort; so our conceptions concerning things lawful and necessary to be sought in prayer, go oftentimes beyond our expressions: either we dare not express them, they are so great, Luke xv. 18, 19; or we cannot express them, they are so many, that expression is too narrow a vent or passage for them, Rom. viii. 26; for he joineth "thinking," or conceiving, with asking, and speaketh of it as being more capacious and comprehensive than our asking doth reach unto, while he saith, "above all that we ask or think."

5. So large is God in his bounty, and so merciful in his way of dealing with his people, that he doth far outstrip not only their prayers, but also their very conceptions and hopes, in so far as when they obtain not all they ask, even then they get above what they ask, delay or disappointment being in that case much better for several reasons than a present grant: for, saith Paul, "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Now he speaketh not of his absolute power, but as it is operative, and working in, and for believers, as appeareth from the instance given; "According to the power that worketh in us," saith he.

6. This superabundant work of God's mighty power, transcending the hopes and apprehensions of the most enlarged hearts, is not reserved wholly to be manifested in the glorification of the elect; but is manifested already to every believer in part; in so far as the work of their conversion at the first, of carrying on the work of grace in them afterwards, of their through-bearing under, and delivery from crosses and trials, the timeous and unexpected trysting [meeting] of several comfortable providences with their necessities, are so many proofs and instances of God's working above what they do ask, or think; for "He is able to work," so, saith he, "according to the power that worketh in us."

7. We ought to look upon the bypast instances of God's gracious and powerful working in us, as so many confirmations of our faith, that he will work powerfully in us for the time to come, yea, and above what he hath already wrought, according as our present state shall call for it: for he maketh God's working powerfully in them at their conversion, an argument to confirm them, that God would work exceeding abundantly even to the fulfilling of all his petitions for them, the accomplishment of some whereof, to wit, their being filled with the fulness of God, was more than any thing already wrought in them; "according to the working of his" mighty "power," saith he.

VER. 21. Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Next, there is the thanksgiving itself, wherein the apostle, having his own heart, doubtless, duly affected, and overcharged with high thoughts of God's goodness, mercy, power, justice, and other attributes, manifested chiefly in that admirable work of redemption, whereof he hath spoken at length from the beginning of this epistle; and having engaged his heart to set forth the glory

and excellency of those praiseworthy attributes both in word and work, doth further wish that this duty of glorifying God may, and thereby also doth fore-prophecy that it shall be gone about by God's true church, to wit, among visible professors, members of the church, and chiefly, sincere believers, (even all such as should find the saving effects of God's glorious attributes in their own experience,) and this in "all ages" and generations, so long as the world should stand, and to all eternity after time shall be ended; and "by Jesus Christ," in whom all their sacrifices of prayers and praises, or of any other performance, are accepted of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. The subject matter of a believer's song of praise and glory to God, is not only those things which God hath graciously done already; but what he is yet to do, together with the consideration of his power and good will to do them: for the apostle doth here ascribe glory to God, even for what "He was able to do above what they could ask or think," as appeareth from the connexion of the two verses.

2. As we ought to make conscience of praise and thanksgiving to God ourselves; so, such is the weight of this duty in itself, Psa. cvi. 2, and so far short doth the best come in it, Neh. ix. 5; so profitable is this duty unto those who do practise it, Psa. cxlvii. 1, that we would seriously wish, and accordingly endeavour that many others would take a lift of it, and join with us in this weighty task of giving glory to God; for this is a part of Paul's giving glory to God, even a wish that the church may join with him in it; "Unto him *be* glory in the church."

3. Though it be the duty of all reasonable creatures to set forth God's glory, yea, and all do set it forth one way or other, even damned men and devils in a passive way, Rom. ix. 17; yet only those are fit to go about this heavenly duty in a spiritual manner, and only such will make conscience of it, whom God hath separated from the world unto himself, and upon whom he doth manifest the gracious effects of his praiseworthy attributes: for he enjoineth this duty unto the church, and especially to real believers in it, because the Lord doth make his glorious attributes in their gracious effects, manifest only to such, Psa. lxxvi. 1, 2, "Unto him *be* glory in the church."

4. Praise and thanksgiving is a duty to be performed, not only by professors and believers severally and apart, but by all of them conjunctly in the assemblies of God's people, as being a part of that public homage we owe to God, Psa. lxxv. 1; and a mean of mutual edification, Col. iii. 16; for, he saith, "Unto him *be* glory in the church."

5. Though the duty of thanksgiving and praise be all which God requireth from us for favours bestowed on us, Psa. l. 15; yet, we cannot discharge even this duty of ourselves and acceptably, but by Jesus Christ, through whom we have furniture and strength to do, Phil. iv. 13; access unto God in doing, Eph. ii. 18, and acceptance with God, when we have done either this, or any other duty, Eph. i. 6; for, he saith, "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus."

6. As God shall never want glory from his church, so there shall always be a church through all ages to hold up this song of praise and glory to God, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, Matt. xvi. 18, neither shall the church ever in any age want matter of praise, the saddest times want not their own mercies; for as this is a wish, so it is a prophecy, that "Unto him shall be glory in the church through all ages."

7. See further (from the continuance of this song unto all eternity, and from the apostle's Amen, whereby he closeth the thanksgiving) upon Gal. i. ver. 5, Doct. 3, and 4, "World without end." Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE apostle, having in the three preceding chapters given a short sum of saving doctrine, doth now, to ver. 21, chap. vi., exhort them to suitable practice. And, first, being to press upon them the practice of such duties as are more general and common to all, as they are Christians, to chap. v. ver. 22, he doth, in the first part of this chapter, exhort them to unity; and, to make way for his so doing, he first premiteth a general exhortation to walk worthy of their vocation, ver. 1; and next, subjoineth a more particular exhortation unto such graces as have a more special influence upon unity, as humility, &c. ver. 2, and so doth fall upon his intended scope, which is to press upon them the study of unity, ver. 3, which he enforceeth, 1. By an argument taken from seven things, which are one and the same in the church and all the true members thereof, ver. 4—6. Secondly, by another argument, taken from these things which are not one, but diverse, almost in every member, to wit, diversity of gifts and graces, and their different measures; which diversity he sheweth doth also tend to union, first, because all those gifts and different measures do come from one author, Christ, ver. 7, which he confirmeth from Psa. lxxviii. 18, cited, ver. 8, commented upon and applied, ver. 9, 10; and further confirmeth it, by giving an instance of those several gifts, in the several offices appointed by Christ in the church, ver. 11; secondly, because they are all given for promoting the same end, the edifying of the church, first, propounded, ver. 12, secondly, illustrated from the term of its continuance by those means, ver. 13, and from two of its fruits, to wit, preservation from error, ver. 14, and growth in grace, ver. 15, by virtue of influence conveyed from Christ, ver. 16.

In the second part, he deborteth them from all impiety and profanity in the general; first, because unconverted Gentiles did live in those, ver. 17, whose godless conversation is set forth distinctly in its several branches and degrees, ver. 18, 19. Secondly, because the knowledge which they had of Christ, was inconsistent with such a licentious life, ver. 20, which he proveth from three things, which that knowledge did oblige, and strongly incline them to, first, to mortify the old man, ver. 22; secondly, to have the mind or

understanding renewed, ver. 23; thirdly, to put on the new man in righteousness and holiness, ver. 24.

In the third part of the chapter are six particular precepts, belonging to the second table: the first is to abstain from lying, and to speak truth, ver. 25; the second, to moderate and suppress anger, ver. 26, else they did cast open doors for Satan to tempt them unto some mischief, ver. 27; the third, to abstain from stealing, and to labour diligently in some lawful calling, ver. 28; the fourth, to abstain from all corrupt communication, and to utter edifying purpose [purpose edification] in their ordinary discourse, ver. 29, because they would otherwise grieve the Spirit, ver. 30; the fifth, is to abstain from all the branches, degrees, and effects of sinful anger, ver. 31; the sixth, is to exercise kindness and tenderheartedness in mutual forgiveness, ver. 32.

VER. 1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

The apostle doth here enforce one general duty, which is a comprehensive sum of all such other duties as he is to press afterwards, and whereof that unity, unto which he exhorteth in the first part of the chapter, is a special evidence. Which general exhortation is, that (supposing that they were effectually called, at least they took themselves for such, and the better part were really such) "they would walk worthy of their vocation," not, as if they had been to purchase and merit by their walking, that God should call them: for the text holdeth out, that they behoved to be called, before they could walk after the manner which the apostle here presseth, and therefore were not to merit vocation by their walking; see 2 Tim. i. 9; but that they ought to walk suitably, and as it becometh those who are dignified with such a calling, as the word is rendered, Rom. xvi. 2; which exhortation is propounded by way of entreaty, and backed with two arguments. The first whereof is hinted at in the illative particle, "therefore," and it is taken from that excellent state, in which free grace had placed them, spoken of in the three preceding chapters. The second is taken from the suffering condition of Paul himself, who did exhort, whose sad sufferings might justly challenge from them obedience unto those truths for which he suffered, as that which would comfort him much under his sufferings; and their denial whereof could not but add affliction to his bonds.

Hence learn, 1. The doctrine of salvation through free grace in Jesus Christ, is so far from ministering an occasion of security, ungodliness, or profanity, that there is no stronger argument to induce men to the conscientious practice of holiness in all the duties thereof, than sanctified knowledge, saving faith, and the solid consideration of that doctrine, especially seeing the principles thereof do many ways engage the believer to lead an holy life, Rom. vi. 2, &c. and the free-gifted salvation offered by it cannot be embraced, except covenanted strength for through-bearing in the way of holiness be embraced also, Rom. viii. 1; for he inferreth the study of holiness from the

doctrine of salvation through free grace; the former being, as it were, the native result and inseparable companion of the latter; "I therefore beseech you, that ye walk worthy."

2. Though there be a necessary connexion betwixt our embracing the doctrine of salvation through free grace, and the study of a holy life, as said is; yet such is our natural averseness from holiness, Rom. viii. 7, so many are the temptations and difficulties which lie in our way to it, 2 Tim. iii. 12, that even the best of men do need the spur of earnest and vehement exhortation to excite unto it: for notwithstanding that Paul holdeth forth upright practice, as the result of embracing the former doctrine, yet he seeth it needful to exhort and "beseech them, that they walk worthy of their vocation."

3. A suffering lot for Christ, is such as those who rightly improve it will highly esteem of it, not only in their first thoughts, and at their first engaging in it, but also and chiefly in their cold blood, after a time's experience, and in their second thoughts: for Paul having boasted (chap. iii. ver. 1,) of his being a prisoner for Christ, he doth here repeat the same, to show he had not reason to eat-in [recall] any thing of what he formerly had said; "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord."

4. It sweeteneth much the sufferings of the saints, that he for whom they suffer is Christ, the Lord, as being worthy to be suffered for, Acts v. 41; and mighty in power to support them under suffering, Matt. x. 19, 20, to deliver from it, 2 Cor. i. 10, to better them by it, Rom. v. 3, 4, and to reward them freely from it, 2 Thess. i. 7; for Paul comforteth himself in this, that he "was the prisoner of the Lord," whom (chap. iii. 1,) he called "Christ."

5. The suffering lot of Christ's ministers obligeth people to yield themselves so much the more obedient in the Lord unto their ministry, by walking like the gospel, there being nothing more comfortable to his suffering servants, than when their sufferings are useful for that end, Phil. i. 14, and nothing more weighty than when it is otherwise, 2 Tim. iv. 10—16; for Paul designeth himself from his sufferings, hereby to add weight to his exhortation; "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord." See more in this style taken by Paul, chap. iii. ver. 1, Doct. 2—7.

6. So ticklish are people to be dealt with in the point of pressing duty, and so ready to cast at duty, when it is not pressed in a way suitable to their own mind, 2 Tim. iv. 3, that though ministers are not to be directed by people, as to the matter which they preach, 2 Chron. xviii. 12, 13, yet as to the manner of bearing-in what is pressed, they are much to condescend to that way which will be most taking with and gaining upon their humour: and particularly, they are to press the duties of holiness, with as much of fervent, earnest, and insinuating entreaty, as if it were a matter of their own concernment only, or as if people by their obedience were to hurt themselves for doing a favour unto their ministers; for Paul doth press his exhortation by an insinuating entreaty, rather than by commanding; "I beseech you;" the word signifieth, vehemently to entreat.

7. It is no small honour which God doth put

upon his people, when he effectually calleth them, and by his omnipotent and irresistible power, John xii. 32, doth draw these who were before dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, from under the power of darkness, and translateth them unto the kingdom of his dear Son, Col. i. 13, giving them actual possession of the state of grace, with all the privileges accompanying that state here, 1 John iii. 2, and a right unto, Luke xii. 32, with the well grounded hope of glory to be enjoyed hereafter, Eph. i. 18; for he speaketh of their vocation as a state of much dignity and honour, requiring a singular sort of walking answerable to it; "That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

8. So far are we from meriting by our holy and tender walking, that God shall call us out of nature unto the state of grace, and consequently bestow a right to heaven and glory upon us, that our effectual calling doth go before our holy walking, as that without which we cannot walk one step acceptably in the ways of God: for Paul supposeth them to be already called, and from that exhorteth them to walk answerably; "That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

9. It is the duty of called Christians, and will also be their care and study, to have a constant eye upon that dignity unto which they are called, that so they may walk worthy of it, and answerably unto it: which then is in some measure performed, when we have respect unto all the commandments, Psa. cxix. 6, and do in a special manner make conscience of all those particular duties after-mentioned in this epistle: for he exhorteth them to walk worthy of their vocation, as their duty following upon and flowing from, that dignity put upon them in effectual calling; "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

10. But more particularly, our carriage and practice cannot be answerable to this excellent state to which we are called, except, first, we shake off sloth and laziness, bestirring ourselves in the way of duty. Secondly, as we begin well, so we hold on without down-sitting and turning aside. And, thirdly, we be daily advancing and making progress in our Christian course; for he designeth a carriage answerable to this excellent state by "walking," which implieth all those three, motion or exercise, constancy in it, and progress in the way; "That ye walk worthy of the vocation."

VER. 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

He doth next exhort unto several graces and duties, the exercise and practice whereof are not only branches of that walking worthy of their vocation, spoken of ver. 1, and here pressed as such, but also necessary helps and means for attaining and entertaining that unity which he is afterwards to press, as first, humility or "lowliness," a grace and virtue whereby a man, from the sense of his own infirmities, Gal. vi. 1, and the uncertainty of outward things which he

enjoyeth, 1 Tim. vi. 17, doth esteem but meanly and soberly of himself, and of all that is his, Phil. ii. 3. Secondly, "meekness," a virtue whereby we are rendered tractable and easy to be conversed with, James iii. 17, whereby also we moderate anger, so that we are not provoked but for just causes, and not more or longer provoked than the word of God alloweth, and do speedily restrain and suppress anger, when it hath transgressed the just bounds, Eph. iv. 26. Thirdly, "long-suffering," which is the same in substance with meekness, only it further implieth the continuance of the exercise of meekness, so as it is not interrupted neither with length of time, nor with multiplication, nor heightening of injuries, Matt. xviii. 22. Fourthly, mutual "forbearance," flowing from "love;" for the right performance whereof, the former three are spoken of as necessary qualifications, (as appeareth from the grammatical construction of the words,) and it consisteth in our pleasant bearing with and tolerating of whatsoever is displeasing or loathsome to us in the carriage of others, though not so as to connive at their sin, or to neglect means of reclaiming them from their sin, Gal. vi. 1, 2, yet so as we do not withhold any necessary duty which we otherwise owe unto them, Matt. v. 44, or cease from following after peace and concord with them, Heb. xii. 14.

Hence learn, 1. How diligent soever a Christian be in public or private duties of God's immediate worship, or in the duties of his particular calling, yet he doth not walk answerably to that excellent dignity unto which he is called, except he be of an humble, meek, and condescending spirit, and do evidence himself to be so, by his digesting of, bearing with, and passing over the infirmities and failings of those whom he converseth with, in so far as he do not make a breach upon the peace and unity of the church of God; for he doth instance their "walking worthy of their vocation" in the exercise of humility, meekness, long-suffering, and in mutual forbearance, in order to the keeping of unity in this and the following verses; "With all lowliness," &c.

2. The grace of humility and lowliness, as it is most befitting Christians, so it is of necessary use to fit men for the duty of mutual forbearance in order to unity and peace, in so far as the humble man, being conscious of his own infirmities, doth know he needeth as much of forbearance from God and others, as others do need from him, Rom. vii. 18, and through humility is made to think but meanly of himself, and highly of others, Phil. ii. 3, 4, and so to eschew vain glory and pride, the usual occasion of strife, Prov. xiii. 10; for he presseth lowliness, in order to forbearance and unity, while he saith, "with all lowliness, forbearing one another," and ver. 3, "endeavouring to keep unity."

3. Humility and lowliness is also necessary to the exercise of meekness and long-suffering, those only being able to moderate anger, and to restrain the inundations of their impetuous passions, when stirred and provoked by real injuries, who being conscious of their own infirmities, do judge but meanly of themselves, and

therefore not too good to have, by the Lord's wise and gracious dispensation, a suffering lot from the wicked and injurious carriage of others, 2 Sam. xvi. 10; for he presseth humility in the first place, as the foundation of and entrance unto all the rest; "With all lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering."

4. There is an allness, or universality, which ought to be in the grace of lowliness: first, with respect to the subject, it ought to extend itself to the whole man, as being seated in the heart, Phil. ii. 3, and kything [appearing] in the outward carriage, Luke xiv. 8. Secondly, with respect to all objects, there must be humility towards God, Acts xx. 19, and humility also towards men, Phil. ii. 3, and towards all sorts of men, not only superiors, Levit. xix. 32, but inferiors also, Job xxxi. 13. Thirdly, with respect to the grace itself, as being without any mixture of the contrary vice, so far as is possible, Psal. cxxxix. 1, 2, and daily growing up towards perfection, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Fourthly, with respect to all cases, so as it be exercised in prosperity, Ezek. xvi. 49, as well as adversity; for, saith he, "with all lowliness;" which note of universality is oft made use of by the apostle when he would express a great measure and degree of any gift or grace. See 1 Cor. i. 5, Phil. i. 9.

5. Meekness and long-suffering, as they differ but little in substance, and are commendable graces in themselves, so they are notable means and helps to fit men for the duty of mutual forbearance, in order to unity, in so far as they do render him who is endowed with them gentle, affable, and easy to be conversed with, and do moderate anger, which is ready to blow the bellows of contention and to stir up strife, Prov. xv. 18; for he exhorteth unto meekness and long-suffering in order to forbearance and unity; "With meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another—endeavouring to keep unity."

6. The best of men have their own infirmities, mistakes, and failings, mutually justling and rubbing upon each other, whereby they prove often unpleasant and burdensome one to another; for this is supposed while they are commanded to "forbear one another."

7. It is the duty of Christians mutually to tolerate and forbear one another, even when there are real grounds of displeasure, for hereby a man overcometh himself and his own corrupt nature, which thirsteth after revenge, Prov. xvi. 32, hereby he overcometh and shameth his party who did him wrong, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, and keepeth God's way in overcoming of him, Rom. xii. 17—21, and hereby a man also, in some comfortable measure, doth entertain peace with others, which otherwise upon every occasion would blow up and vanish; for he enjoineth this mutual forbearance, as a remedy against the clashing of mutual infirmities, and for entertaining of unity and peace; "forbearing one another—endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit."

8. This duty of forbearance is to be exercised to the person of our brother, rather than his faults; we are so to bear with his person, as to endeavour the bearing down of his sin by admonition, 2 Thess. iii. 15, reproof, Levit. xix. 17, or correction, Prov. xiii. 24, as we have other-

wise access; and yet we are so to meddle with his faults, as in the meantime we may give due respect to his person, not irritating or provoking his corruptions, while we intend to cure them; for, saith he, "forbearing one another," which relateth to persons rather than to faults.

9. This duty of forbearance ought to be mutual, and cannot in reason be expected by any from others to themselves, who are not ready themselves to repay it unto others; seeing there is no man who wanteth his own infirmities which call for forbearance, James iii. 2, and that every man is obliged to do as he would be done to by others, Matt. vii. 12; for, saith he, "forbearing one another."

10. Love to our neighbour, whereby our heart and inmost affections are inclined and disposed towards him for his good, as they ought, as it is the great root and fountain of all duties towards others, without which they are but counterfeit shadows, and not real and sincere, 1 Cor. xiii. 3; so it doth in a special manner dispose and fit us for this duty of mutual forbearance; love covereth a multitude of sins, 1 Pet. iv. 8, and maketh us bear with many things in the person loved, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7, which otherwise flesh and blood would not digest, 2 Cor. xii. 15; for he holdeth out love as the fountain of all the rest, and especially of mutual forbearance; "With all lowliness—forbearing one another in love."

11. Whence it followeth that this duty of mutual forbearance ought to flow from a principle of love, and therefore, though we forbear from necessity, because we dare not do otherwise, or from policy, until we get opportunity to right ourselves, or from respect to our own ease only, lest by resenting injuries and miscarriages we create trouble to ourselves, or if we tolerate, connive at, and foster the sins of others, under a pretence of forbearing them, which is inconsistent with love to them, Lev. xix. 17; in all those cases, our forbearance is not acceptable service to God, nor yet in any case but when it is performed in love, and from a principle thereof; for the forbearance he enjoineth, is "forbearing one another in love."

VER. 3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

He doth now fall upon the main scope of this first part of the chapter, exhorting them by all possible endeavours to keep the union of all the members of the church, being united together by the Holy Ghost, even in heart, and especially in things spiritual; all which are implied in this "unity of the Spirit;" and that, in order to this unity, they would be of a peaceable disposition and deportment, to wit, so as not to make unnecessary ruptures and breaches upon every difference, whereby they should be firmly knit together, as the members of one body by its several ligaments and sinews.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there are several sorts of union in the church, and more particularly besides that union which is amongst the members of the invisible church, the bond whereof is the saving graces of

God's Spirit, (all of them being united to Christ, the head, by faith, Eph. iii. 17, and one to another by love, Col. iii. 14,) there is an union also of the visible church and the members thereof amongst themselves; and this is twofold, the one necessary to the being of a church and being of a church-member, so that a church cannot be a church, nor a man a member of the visible church without it, the tie of which union is God's covenant with the visible church, and the church's professed embracing and laying hold upon that covenant, when offered in the gospel, Psal. i. 5; the other necessary to the well-being of the church, which is entertained by unity in judgment, 1 Cor. i. 10, in heart and affection, Acts iv. 32, by concurrence in purposes and actings, Phil. i. 27, so all those sorts of union, and union in all those respects, is to be sought after and entertained in the church; for the apostle speaketh indefinitely, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit."

2. The union which God requireth among his people, is not an union in sin or error, Isa. vii. 12, nor yet a civil union only, in things worldly, upon politic and civil interests, Acts xii. 20, nor yet a mere outside agreement or living together only, Psal. lv. 21, but an union in heart and spirit in things spiritual, and such an union whereof the Spirit of God is author; for therefore is it called the unity of the Spirit; "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit."

3. The study of keeping peace and unity in the church, is a most necessary duty, as being one prime instance of walking worthy of our vocation, spoken of ver. 1; and yet such is the restlessness of some, and the prevalency of pride, passion, love to self-interest, and such like dividing lusts in others, that it is a duty most difficult to be practised, as being the result of all those graces mentioned ver. 2, and not attainable even by those who are endowed with those graces, except they apply themselves wholly to it, and use the utmost of their serious endeavours for that end, as is clear from the connexion of this verse with the two preceding, and from the word in the original, rendered "endeavouring," implying study, diligence, and solicitude.

4. Neither fair pretences for peace and union in the church, nor seconded, but rather contradicted by practice, nor yet some careless endeavours, which are easily broken by appearing difficulties, are that which God will accept of at our hands as the duty required for preserving unity in the church, where it is, or for restoring unity where it is already lost; there is no less called for than the utmost of our serious endeavours for that end, so as we not only carefully eschew what may on our part give cause of rending, 1 Cor. viii. 13, but also that we be not easily provoked when a cause of rending is given by others, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, and that when a rent is made, we spare no pains, nor stand upon any thing, which properly is our own, for having it removed, Gen. xiii. 8, 9, and that we do not weary of those endeavours under small appearances of present success, 2 Cor. xii. 15; for he biddeth them seriously "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit."

5. So many are the temptations arising from

the corruptions of those among whom we live, to make us neglect this duty of keeping the union of the Spirit, that except we be of such peaceable dispositions as to digest many things one in another, which otherwise our corruptions would make much stir about, we cannot choose but fall at odds, rend asunder as so many disjointed legs and arms, and upon every occasion involve ourselves and the church of Christ in several sad and dangerous broils and ruptures; for he calleth "peace," that is, a peaceable disposition, kything [appearing] in all our deportment, the "bond," or ligament, whereby the members of the church are knit together: "in the bond of peace," saith he.

6. Whatever differences may fall out among the members of the church in the matter of opinion and judgment, yet they are not presently to break the bond of peaceable walking one with another by counteractings and factious sidings, but ought to study unanimous and joint practice in those things wherein there is agreement; and where this peaceable deportment, flowing from a peaceable frame of spirit, is, it tendeth much to preserve what remaineth of this spiritual unity, and to regain what is already lost; for peace with man, which is the peace here spoken of, doth especially consist in our harmonious walking together, flowing from a peaceable frame of spirit, and is here enjoined as a special mean for "keeping the unity of the Spirit," even "in the bond of peace."

VER. 4. *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

He doth now enforce the former exhortation to unity and peace, first, from an argument taken from those many things which are one and the same in the church and all the true members thereof; and for this end doth reckon forth seven unities, which may be looked upon as so many bonds and ties of the essential unity, especially of the invisible church, and as so many arguments also, that therefore all, professing Christ, should not only labour to be one in all those, as they would evidence themselves to be sincere believers and members of that blessed society, but also improve their unity in these, for keeping unity and peace in lesser differences.

There are three of these unities, which are so many bonds and arguments, in this verse. The first is, that the whole church is but one body, to wit, the invisible church of real believers is one mystical body, knit by faith to Christ their head, Eph. iii. 17, and by the bond of love among themselves, John xiii. 35. And the visible church is one politic body, 1 Cor. xii. 27, conjoined with Christ their head, and among themselves by external covenanting, Psa. l. 5, and their serious professing of saving truths, Acts viii. 12, 13, with 23, and this body is but "one," the invisible church without all doubt is so, and the Catholic visible church, made up of all Christians and true churches in the world, is also one, because they have the same king, laws, word, sacraments of admission and nutrition,

which they visibly subject themselves to and receive, and have a grant of the same common privileges from God in the gospel, and therefore they are all one visible church.

2. There is but one Spirit, to wit, the third person in the blessed Trinity, who, residing in Christ, the head, Isa. lxi. 1, and in all the members, Rom. viii. 9, as the soul in the natural body, doth by his gifts and graces animate, move, and govern the church, the body presently spoken of.

3. As the church is one in these two; so their hope, following upon effectual calling, is also one. Where, by hope is not so much meant the grace of hope, as the object of that grace or good things hoped for, as Col. i. 5, especially heaven and glory, the common inheritance of the saints, Col. i. 12, which they get not in hand, but only do possess it in hope, Rom. viii. 24, 25. And this hope is said to be one, to wit, for kind and substance, though there will be different degrees in glory, Dan. xii. 2, 3.

DOCTRINES.

1. That the whole church, and all the members thereof, are but one body, is a strong argument enforcing the duty of keeping peace and unity; it being no less absurd and prodigious for Christians to bite and devour one another, than if the members of one and the self-same natural body should rise up against, tear and destroy one another: for he enforceth the study of unity from this, "That there is one body."

2. That any be a member of this one body, it is necessary he have the Spirit of God residing in him, whereby he may be quickened and acted, either by the saving operations of that one Spirit, otherwise he cannot be a member of the invisible body, Rom. viii. 9, 10; or by his common gifts and operations, otherwise a man, come to age and understanding, cannot be a member, no, not of the visible body, 1 Cor. xii. 11; for he maketh this one body and one Spirit of equal extent; "There is one body, and one Spirit."

3. That the whole church, and all the members thereof, are animated and acted by one and the self-same Spirit of God, is a strong motive to incite to the study of peace and unity, seeing dividing lusts and practices are among those sins which grieve the Spirit, (see ver. 30, 31,) and that the difference of gifts and graces, wrought in us by that one Spirit, are given of purpose to make each member either useful to another by that wherein it excelleth, or indigent of the help of others in that wherein it cometh short, and so to have the same care one of another, 1 Cor. xii. from ver. 14, to the end: for he preseth unity from this, that there "is one Spirit."

4. As an external call by the ministry of the word, and professed obedience thereto, is sufficient to make a man a member of the visible body, and to partake of the common operations of the Spirit, so that any be of this mystical invisible body, and quickened and acted by the saving operations of this one Spirit, it is necessary they be effectually called, and actually translated out of their natural state to the state of grace: for he maketh their being of this one

body, and having this one Spirit, to be necessarily joined with their calling, to wit, their being of the visible body, and having the common operations of the Spirit with the external calling, and their being of the invisible body, and having the saving operations of the Spirit, with the inward and effectual calling; "Even as ye are called."

5. Though effectual calling be a work of God's Spirit, there being none who comes to Christ except the Father draw him, John vi. 44, yet none is completely called, until he yield obedience to God's call, and being wrought upon by God, doth actually work and concur with God for that end: for what he called (chap. i. ver. 18,) "God's calling," is here expressed to be their calling, because then only are we called when we obey the call of God; "In one hope of your calling," saith he.

6. As those, who are yet in nature, not effectually called, are in a hopeless state, having no right to heaven and happiness, and consequently no ground to hope for it, how big soever they be otherways in their vain and groundless hopes, Deut. xxix. 19, 20; so effectual calling doth open to the person called a large door of well-grounded hope, that whatever be his misery here, yet he shall be perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God for evermore hereafter: for the called man only hath right to those rich promises, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4, and God by calling him, doth engage himself to perform all that is promised to the called man, according to his hope, 1 Thess. v. 23, with 24; for therefore are those glorious things hoped for called "the hope of our calling."

7. The consideration of this, that called saints are all of them aiming at one and the self-same prize of their high calling, and shall live together in glory, should be a strong argument to make them live in peace and concord, while they are here. Their joint aiming at one mark should make them of one mind and heart, especially seeing there is that in glory which will suffice all; and their seeking of one thing needeth be no occasion of strife and emulation, but rather of unity in heart, mind, and affection: for why should they strive together, who not only are brethren, Gen. xiii. 8, but also are heirs together of the grace of life, 1 Pet. iii. 7, yea, heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17, and shall one day reign together in glory? for he presseth their keeping unity from this, that they were effectually called, and heaven and glory hoped for would suffice all and be enjoyed by all; "Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

VER. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

In this verse are other three of these unities, which are also so many bonds of and incitements to that unity exhorted unto, ver. 3. First, there is but one Lord: which title, though it belong to all the three persons in the blessed Trinity by right of creation, and accordingly is given to God under the name of Master, Mal. i. 6; yet seeing the unity of the Spirit is spoken to, ver. 4, and of God the Father, ver. 6, therefore it ought in this place to be astricted to Christ, the

second person, to whom it is in a peculiar manner due by right of redemption; in so far as he hath redeemed the elect from their natural slavery and bondage under sin, Satan, and God's wrath, to be a peculiar people unto himself, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, and hereby hath purchased a right to rule over them, as Mediator, Lord-depute, and Administrator under the Father, Phil. ii. 9-11. And he is said to be but one Lord, there being none to whom, either as partner, or substitute, he will communicate this his glory of dominion and lordship over his church, either in whole or in part, 1 Pet. v. 3. Secondly, there is but one faith, where by faith may be meant the grace of faith, for that is also one, in respect of the author God, Col. ii. 12, of the object which it apprehendeth, the whole word of God, Acts xxiv. 14, and especially Christ, and the promises, Phil. iii. 9; yet by faith is mainly here meant the doctrine of faith, propounded by God to be believed, as Gal. i. 23, and this doctrine is but one, because, though in the several ages of the church it was proposed diverse ways, and with considerable variation in some weighty circumstances, Eph. ii. 14, 15, yet in substance it hath been, is, and ever shall be the same, Acts xv. 11, Heb. xiii. 8; and from Christ's coming in the flesh, even to the end of the world, it is to remain the same, both for substance and circumstance, Heb. xii. 27, 28, and though there be different opinions in the church about divine truths revealed in the Scripture, which occasioneth different faiths, (see ver. 13,) yet there is only this one faith, allowed by Christ, neither is there any other faith but this one in true believers, if we look to those truths which are of absolute necessity to salvation; there is an agreement in those, and one and the same faith of those in all, whatever may be their differences about other inferior truths, Acts iv. 12. Thirdly, there is but one baptism, whereby is meant neither the baptism of affliction, Matt. xx. 22, nor of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 5, but the ordinary sacrament of baptism, the practice whereof is enjoined by Christ under the gospel, Matt. xxviii. 19. And it is said to be one, not in respect of the persons administering, or receiving this ordinance, but of its nature and substance, as having the same author, Christ, Matt. xxviii. 19, the same outward element, for kind, Acts viii. 36, the same way of administration enjoined, Matt. xxviii. 19, the same ends and uses towards those who are baptized, Rom. vi. 3, 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. All these, who are of this one body, animated and acted by this one Spirit, and have well grounded hope of glory, they must, and do subject themselves to Christ, as Lord, in so far as they are ruled by his laws, Acts ix. 6, and patiently submit to his corrections and chastisements, Heb. xii. 6, 7; for he maketh their being of one body, having one Spirit and one hope, and their subjection to this one Lord, of equal extent; "one Lord," saith he.

2. The consideration of this, that the whole church, and all the members thereof, are subject to the dominion of one Lord and Master, Christ

Jesus, is a strong argument for enforcing this duty of keeping unity and peace among themselves; this being a duty, which not only he did press most vehemently upon his followers, when he was about to leave the world, and depart from them, John xiii. 34, 35, but also did most earnestly entreat the Father for, even that they might be all made one in him, John xvii. 21, 22. Besides, what a shame is it for the servants of one Master to fall at odds among themselves, and thereby neglect their Master's work committed to them? for he presseth the study of unity from this, that there is "one Lord."

3. The law, by which the Lord Christ will have his subjects ruled and governed, is not searched out, and known by sense or natural reason, but being revealed in the word, it is laid hold upon by faith, and credit given to him, because of his authority who hath revealed it: for so much may be gathered from his making mention of faith, or the doctrine of faith, immediately after he had spoken of the Lord Christ; "one Lord, one faith," saith he.

4. The consideration of this, that the whole church, and all the true and lively members thereof, do profess one and the same fundamental truths revealed in Scripture, as the only object of saving faith and way to salvation, ought to be a strong motive for keeping concord and unity in all other things, which otherwise might occasion dissension and strife. This agreement in the main, in the journey's end, and the necessary way which leadeth to it, should make them ashamed to fall at odds and strife about other things of less importance and moment: for he presseth unity from this, that there is "one faith."

5. The wise Lord hath judged it fitting to add the sacraments, as seals unto the doctrine of faith and salvation contained in Scripture; that hereby we may be the more enabled to take up and understand that doctrine, and be the more affected with it, as having the purpose of it, not only exhibited and presented to our ear in the word, but to our eye also in the sacrament, and that we may be the more confirmed in the truth of that doctrine, as having not only his word and writ for it, but also his seal and pledge: for after mention made of the doctrine of faith, he presently addeth, there is "one baptism."

6. The Lord hath added sacraments to the doctrine of faith, not only for the reasons mentioned, but also for engaging the party receiver unto such duties as the doctrine of faith doth press upon him; a sacrament being as a military oath, whereby we bind ourselves to fight under the Lord's banner, and in all things to be for him: for he doth press them to duty, even to keep unity, from this, that they were partakers of this "one baptism."

7. The consideration of this, that the church and all the members thereof are dedicated to God, in one and the same sacrament of baptism, unto the receiving whereof all do accord, is a strong motive to make them keep peace and unity in other things, seeing this oneness in baptism doth imply our communion in all other things, which are signified and sealed unto us by that sacrament, which are all those things where-

in our salvation is most nearly concerned, and that by baptism we are solemnly engaged to go about our Master's work, Rom. vi. 4, and so to eschew all rending and falling out among ourselves, by which his work is much retarded: for he maketh this another argument to enforce unity, that they did all partake of one baptism. Only know, that though we are not to re-baptise those who are baptized by schismatical and heretical churches, even though they err in some fundamental truths, so long as the substantial parts of baptism are preserved, though mixed with much of their own superstitious trash, and therefore in some respect we may be said to have one common baptism with them; yet it doth not follow hence, that we are tied to keep unity with them simply and in all respects. We are only hereby tied to seek union with them, not by joining in their schism or damnable heresies, but by labouring to reclaim them from those: and if they be one in all the other essential ties and bonds of union here mentioned, as of having one Lord, one faith, &c., this oneness of baptism doth engage to be willing and endeavour for our part to keep the bond of peace with them in other things: for those seven unities or bonds, and arguments, are not to be taken separately, but jointly as to the pressing of unity: yea, and though they be not one in all the rest, yet it engageth us to own them in those things wherein they are right and owned by God, providing always we touch no unclean thing, 2 Cor. vi. 17. In these respects, and with those limitations, we deny not but unity should be kept with heretical churches, even the church of Rome herself.

VER. 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Here is the seventh unity, which is the last bond or tie of the church's essential unity, and serveth also for an argument persuading to keep peace and unity in other lesser differences: which argument is first propounded, to wit, all believers have one common God and Father; for though God, as Creator, is the God and Father of all the creatures, Acts xvii. 28, 29, yet, seeing the apostle is speaking of the union of the church, and of all the members thereof, for urging whereof this consideration of "one God and Father of all," is used as an argument; therefore it seemeth he is called God and Father with respect to those, and chiefly to real believers in the church, to whom he is God and Father in a peculiar way. He is their God, by entering a gracious covenant with them, whereof this is one article, that he shall be their God, Jer. xxxi. 33, that is, all in him shall be forthcoming for their good; he is their Father also by receiving them into the number, and by giving them a right unto all the privileges of the sons of God, John i. 12. Now though this may be meant of all the persons of the blessed Trinity, not only the first, but also the second and the third, being the God and Father of believers, John xx. 28, Acts v. 3, 4, yea, all of them being one and the same God, 1 John v. 7; yet seeing the Son and Holy Ghost are spoken of before, ver. 4, 5, the first person is mainly to be understood here, who is called "one God," not seclud-

ing the Son and Holy Ghost, who are one and the same God in essence with the Father, but in opposition to idols, who are no gods, 1 Cor. viii. 6.

This argument or bond of unity is next enlarged in a description of this one God. First, from his eminency and dominion above all his creatures. Secondly, from his presence and powerful providence, whereby he runneth through all the creatures, upholding them in their being, Heb. i. 3, directing, disposing, and governing all of them, Dan. iv. 34, and all their actions, Psa. cxxxv. 6. Thirdly, from his special presence by the gracious operations of his Holy Spirit with the truly regenerate, whereby he is said to be "in all," to point out the intimacy and nearness of his presence in this respect above the former, and not simply "in all," as formerly, but "in you all," meaning the believing Ephesians and such as they were.

DOCTRINES.

1. As our strongest union is to be one in God, and our greatest happiness to have interest in this one God; so by making use of Christ, as he is held forth in the doctrine of faith, and sealed to us in the sacrament, we may come up to plead interest in God; for as he placeth this unity of having one God in the last place, because it is most considerable; so he doth subjoin it immediately to what he spake of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism: there is one God and Father," saith he.

2. The unity of the Godhead in the trinity of the persons, ought to be a strong motive to stir us up to unity among ourselves: seeing there is nothing wherein we can resemble God more, John xvii. 21—23; for the apostle enforceth the study of unity from this, that there is "one God."

3. This motive for keeping unity is so much the stronger, and more moving, when we consider, that this God hath graciously become the common Father of all believers through Jesus Christ, whereby they are all the sons and daughters of one Father, 2 Cor. vi. 18, and so a matter full of shame for them to strive and contend among themselves, Gen. xiii. 8, for he strengtheneth this argument for unity from this, that this "one God" is the "Father of all," to wit, of all believers.

4. Whatever be the other differences among believers, and their discouragements arising hence, as that some are strong, some are weak, some rich, some poor, &c., yet this is a privilege common to all, which may counterbalance all their other inequality, even that they have all equal interest in one God, and that this one God is their common Father, and therefore will have a fatherly affection, Matt. vii. 11, pity, Psa. ciii. 13, and care of all, Matt. vi. 25, &c.; for, saith he, "there is one God, and Father of all."

5. It is the duty of ministers, when they are pressing duty to God upon people, and of people, when they would charge sense of duty to God upon themselves, to set forth and be much taken up with God's excellency and greatness; this being a singular mean to engage the heart unto high esteem of him, and from esteem to serve and honour him, Mal. i. 6, for the apostle, press-

ing upon these Ephesians the duty of unity, doth hold him forth in his glory and greatness: "Who is above all, and through all."

6. God's sovereignty and greatness doth not mar his low condescendency to supply the emptiness and necessities of his creatures; for, though he be "above all" in dignity, yet he is "through all," upholding and overruling all by his powerful providence.

7. Whatever God is by his common providence unto all his creatures, he is all that and much more to his own called people and real believers; for he is "through all" by his common providence; but besides that, saith he, "he is in you all," to wit, by the presence of his Spirit and special grace.

8. From all those seven unities jointly considered, and the apostle's scope in all, learn, 1. The essential unity of the church, which cannot be broken, the church remaining a true church, and the many things wherein there is of necessity an agreement that way, is a strong argument to enforce the study of unity and peace in other things of less concernment: for the apostle doth here press unity, by reckoning seven unities, wherein they did agree, as if he had said, what a shame is it for you, who are so many ways one, to rend in pieces for those things which comparatively are just nought. 2. So near and intimate is that conjunction of true believers, so many, strong, and indissoluble are these spiritual bonds, by which they are knit together among themselves, that if they were duly pondered, the hearts of those who fear the Lord could not choose but be mutually enlarged, and their affections inflamed one to another, as to their dearest friends; yea, the most strict of civil, carnal, and natural bonds, should not bind so firmly as those, Matt. xii. 48, &c., for "they are one body, one Spirit, have one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God." And what conjunction or union can be so firm, as what is grounded upon all those?

VER. 7. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Hitherto the apostle hath enforced the study of unity, by an argument taken from those things that are one and the same in the church and all the true members thereof. Now followeth the second argument from those things which are not one in all, but diverse almost in every one, to wit, the diversity of gifts and graces bestowed by God upon the several members of the church; which diversity also he sheweth doth tend to union, because, first, all those several gifts and their divers measures, do come from one and the same Author, to ver. 12. Secondly, they are all given for promoting one and the same end, to ver. 17. And, first, in this verse, by way of correction, and preoccupation of an objection, he holdeth forth Christ as the author of all those gifts and different measures, to this purpose, that notwithstanding of what he said of those many things wherein they were one; yet there were other things wherein they did differ, which nevertheless were so far from dissolving in reason the bond of

union, that upon the contrary they did contribute much for keeping of it firm ; in so far as, though every true member of the church had his own peculiar grace, and in some respects, either as to the substance, or measure of the grace, differing from the grace of others, yet all those different graces of the several members are bestowed by one and the same Christ, and received in the measure and degree which seemeth good unto Christ the giver to prescribe and measure out unto every one: where by grace is not meant God's favour, or grace freely bestowing, as in other places, (see upon Eph. ii. 8,) but the fruits flowing from this grace, to wit, grace freely given, as appeareth from the instance given, ver. 11, of this grace in the ministerial gifts and offices: which graces are of two sorts, first, saving, which are only in the regenerate, called "grace," because they flow from, and are evidences of, God's grace and favour, 1 John iv. 19; secondly, common gifts, called "grace," Eph. iii. 8, because they are freely given, 1 Cor. iv. 7. The latter whereof is here chiefly meant, as appeareth also from the instance given, ver. 11, because it is only in those common gifts and graces wherein real believers do differ, as to the substance of them, some being given to one, and some to another, 1 Cor. xii. 8, whereas all have one and the same saving graces, 2 Pet. i. 1, although they differ also in the measure and degree received of those, 1 John ii. 13, in which respect even saving graces may be also here meant.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the Lord is not pleased to bestow upon all the members of the church an equal measure of gifts and graces, yet he giveth to every one some gift, and in some measure, and those either the common gifts of his Spirit, as to all the members of the church visible come to age, and the right use of common reason, 1 Cor. xii. 11, or, saving grace also, as to all the truly regenerate, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4; for, he saith, "unto every one of us is grace given."

2. The Lord is pleased to dispense his graces and gifts to every one, not in the same, but in a different measure, so that though the same saving grace for substance be given to all the truly regenerate, yet it is not given to all in the same measure, nor yet to any in any measure, who are visible professors only: and though all have some common gifts whereby in some measure they may be made profitable in their station to the body, yet none hath all gifts; nor all the same offices, wherein they may exercise their gifts, ver. 11; nor yet do all receive the same measure of those common gifts; for so much is implied, while he saith, "Grace is given according to a measure."

3. The greatest degree of gifts and graces, which God bestoweth upon any, is far below that fulness of grace which is in Christ: he giveth unto none so much, but there is always somewhat wanting, and they who have received most, are capable of receiving more: for their receiving grace according to a measure, implieth their receipts are capable of increase, and a difference, as to this, between their receipts and Christ's,

John iii. 34. "To every one is given grace according to that measure."

4. The want of some excellent gifts bestowed upon others, or of that excellent measure of saving graces which others have, doth not argue a man unregenerate, or wholly destitute of saving grace: for the apostle sheweth that even those who had one hope, Lord, faith, God, and Father, and consequently had saving grace, ver. 4—6, were not all gifted with one and the same, but with a diverse measure of gifts and graces, while he saith, "But to every one of us is grace given according to the measure."

5. Diversity of gifts in the church, and diverse measures of saving grace, are an ordinary occasion of division and strife; in so far as these dividing lusts of pride, contempt, envy, discouragement, are apt to take occasion to stir and vent themselves from those different measures: for the apostle his entering upon this argument for union from the diversity of gifts by the adversative particle "but," doth imply that they were prone to take occasion to rend upon that diversity, and therefore he doth jointly preoccupy an objection against union, and bring an argument for it; "But unto every one of us is grace given."

6. Whatever be men's proneness and inclination to rend and divide because of different receipts and measures, yet that same diversity, if well considered, would be found to be one of the strongest ties and bonds of union; in so far as hereby none, no, not the most eminently gifted, can say he hath no need of others, but every one are made mutually indigent of one another's help, and even the meanest in some measure furnished to be helpful unto others: (see Paul proving this excellently from the similitude of the different members in the natural body, 1 Cor. xii. 14, &c.) for the apostle's scope, in this and the following verses, is to enforce unity from the diversity of gifts and graces amongst the members of the church; "But unto every one of us is grace given."

7. This doth also enforce the study of unity from this ground of diversity of gifts, if we consider, that all we have of that kind, is freely given, and therefore we are not to be puffed up with it, nor to abuse it, contrary to the mind of the Giver; and that both our gifts and measures, however diverse, do yet come from one rise, fountain, and Author, and therefore we ought to be one in making use of them; and that this one author is the Lord Christ, God-man, Mediator, in whose hands are all things given of the Father, Matt. xi. 27, that he may dispense to whom, and in what measure he pleaseth, and therefore we are not only not to quarrel for our own measure, it being his allowance, who doth all things well and wisely, Mark vii. 37, but also ought to employ our gifts and several measures for the edification, and not the rending of his body, which is the church: for the apostle enforceth unity from the diversity of gifts upon those considerations, that they were given by one and the same Christ; "But to every one is grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

VER. 8. Wherefore he saith, When he as-

cended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

The apostle, secondly, in this first branch of the second general argument for union, from the diversity of gifts, doth confirm, from *Psa. lxxviii. 18*, what he presently said, that Christ is the author and bestower of all graces and gifts with their different measures. In which place of the *Psalm*, David doth look through the ark, a type and shadow, to Christ the substance, and in a prophetic way, speaking of things to come as already past, to point out the certainty of their performance, he doth foretell that Christ should, in a triumphant manner, "ascend up on high," or unto the highest heavens, (see *ver. 10*;) and that at and by virtue of his ascension he should, first, "lead captivity captive," that is, as he had upon the cross foiled his many enemies, and begun to triumph over them, *Col. ii. 15*, so in his ascension he should continue the triumph, evidently declaring, that he had given a total rout to all the spiritual enemies of his church and kingdom. The expression used to set forth this purpose, hath in it an allusion to conquerors, who, in their triumphing solemnities, used to drive their captive enemies before their own triumphant chariots. See this expression used in the same sense, *Judges v. 12*; and, secondly, following the same allusion to triumphing conquerors, who used to divide and scatter the spoil, and other magnificent gifts among the applauding citizens and soldiers, he sheweth that Christ should at and by virtue of his ascension pour forth and distribute a large measure of gifts and graces upon his church and several members thereof: which prophecy, the apostle, citing the place with some variation of the words, but keeping close to the sense and purpose, doth show was now fulfilled by Christ; and consequently, that Christ is the bestower of all graces and gifts with their different measures, as was affirmed, *ver. 7*.

DOCTRINES.

1. Ministers ought to hold forth nothing for truth, or press nothing as duty upon the Lord's people, but what they may confirm and prove to be such from the authority of God speaking in Scripture: yea, and it is their duty sometimes to bring forward their proof, by making express mention of it: for thus doth Paul confirm what he spake, *ver. 7*, by a testimony cited from the *Psalms*; wherefore he saith, that is, "David," or the Spirit of God speaking by "David," saith.

2. As there was much of Christ revealed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, though but darkly, and under a veil of types and ceremonial shadows; so he was revealed and spoken of in those Scriptures as true God and Jehovah: for that which is said, *Psa. lxxviii.*, was spoken of God, even Jehovah, as appeareth from *ver. 4*, and all along, which Paul sheweth here was fulfilled in Christ; "wherefore he saith, "he hath ascended," &c.

3. Though the very words and phrase of Scripture are much to be thought of and closely adhered unto so far as is possible, lest by our unnecessary casting of Scripture purpose in an

affected strain of words unknown to Scripture, we lose at length the purpose with the words, *2 Tim. i. 13*; yet the sense and meaning of Scripture is mainly to be sought after and kept in remembrance, so that though we do not call to mind the very words of such a scripture, but only the sense, meaning, and purpose of it, we may draw comfort or information from it, or make use of it otherways: for the apostle here, as oft elsewhere, doth not so much adhere to the precise words, as to the sense of that Scripture which he cites, in so far as where in the *Psalm* it is said, "Thou hast ascended, and received gifts for men," to wit, he received them to be given to men, it is here, "When he ascended, and gave gifts unto men."

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ having finished the work which was given him to do on earth, *John xvii. 4*, did locally ascend unto heaven, carrying his human nature up thither, *Acts i. 9, 10*, that so he might be exalted in that glory which he had before the world was, *John xvii. 5*, and take possession of heaven in our name, *Eph. ii. 6*, and there prepare a place for us, *John xiv. 2*; for saith he, "When he ascended up on high."

5. As Christ did engage in a warfare on our behalf with many strong and potent enemies, to wit, the devil, the world, sin, death and hell; so he hath carried the day of all, and gained an absolute complete victory over all, in so far as though the godly must have a battle with these, *Eph. vi. 12*, yet Christ, the head of believers, is now above the reach of hazard from enemies, and consequently believers in their head: yea, and they themselves are above all hazard also, in so far as all their enemies cannot mar their salvation, *Rom. viii. 35*, &c. Sin and Satan doth not reign in them, *Rom. vi. 12, 14*, death hath lost its sting towards them, *1 Cor. xv. 55*, and become a passage unto life, *Phil. i. 23*; for by this "captivity," which Christ led captive, is meant not those whom he delivered from captivity, but whom he fought against, brought in captivity, and triumphed over, even all his and our spiritual enemies; "He led captivity" (or, a multitude of captives) "captive."

6. The constant opposition which Satan raiseth against the church and kingdom of Christ, doth not so much flow from any principle of hope in him to prevail in that woful work, as from his inveterate blinded malice against the salvation of sinners, so that he cannot but malign and oppose it, though he know he cannot mar it: for at Christ's ascension he could not but know, that by all his malicious cruel actings against Christ, he had effectuated nothing but his own eternal shame and confusion, seeing that Christ did thereby openly declare "He had led captivity captive."

7. As those, for whom Christ did purchase any good or advantage by his death, and did manifest his purchasing good for them by his ascension, were men, and not devils; so not only saving graces, which are given to the elect only, but also common gifts, are a part of his purchase, which are given sometimes to reprobates for the good and edification of his church, *Matt. vii. 22, 23*; for both these are comprehended here under "gifts," which being purchased by his death, he

did at his ascension in a larger measure than formerly "give unto men," and to men indefinitely, even to rebels, *Psa. lxxviii. 18.*

VER. 9. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth ?

The apostle doth, thirdly, comment upon, and apply the cited testimony. And, first, he sheweth what Christ's ascending unto heaven (to wit, by his own divine power, otherwise the apostle's inference in this place should not hold) did presuppose, as necessarily foregoing, even his previous humiliation and abasement in all its steps, expressed by his "descending to the lower parts of the earth;" where, the "lower parts" are to be understood, by comparing not the parts of the earth among themselves, but earth with heaven, the earth being the lowest part of the world; and particularly, it pointeth either at his conception in the womb of the virgin, (see conception so expressed, *Psa. cxxxix. 15,* or at his burial, (expressed by a like phrase, *Matt. xii. 40;*) wherein the apostle's scope is not only to prove, that the former testimony is pertinently cited, and applied to Christ, but also to press humility in order to unity and peace from Christ's example, as *Phil. ii. 7.* Now, Christ is said to have "descended," not properly and locally, as man, (for, before his incarnation he was not man,) but as God, and therefore not properly by changing place, but improperly, and with respect had to his state, by taking on the human nature upon earth, under the infirmities whereof he did for a time hide his divine glory, so that very little of it did appear, and to some few only, *Isa. liiii. 12.*

DOCTRINES.

1. Sacred Scripture is a great depth, containing much more than what is obvious at the first view; and therefore we are to advert not only to that which is expressly said in Scripture, but what may be drawn from it by direct and just consequence; for Paul doth so look on this testimony of Christ's ascension, as finding another great truth concerning his previous humiliation lurking under it, and by just consequence deducible from it, while he saith, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he first descended?"

2. It is not enough for ministers to cite scriptures for confirmation of those truths which they hold forth to the Lord's people, except the scriptures cited be pertinent, and the pertinency of them be also made clear and obvious: for Paul, having cited a scripture to confirm somewhat which he said of Christ, doth prove the scripture cited doth speak of Christ, because it implieth previous descending and humiliation in the party spoken of, which can agree to none other of the persons of the blessed Trinity, but to Christ only; "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended?"

3. Such was the love of Christ to lost sinners, *John xv. 13,* and to the glory of his own and his Father's mercy to be manifested in their salvation, *John xvii. 4,* that he did willingly lay aside his glory, which he had with his Father before

the world was, *John xvii. 5,* by assuming the nature of man to himself, and suffering therein the utmost of misery and grief which the malice of men and devils could inflict, and which seemed good unto the Father, in order to the satisfaction of provoked justice, to inflict, *Heb. x. 7;* for all this is implied in his "descending;" and saith Paul, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended?"

4. Then do we study and know Christ's exaltation aright, when we do also seriously consider, and think upon his previous humiliation and abasement; for therein we may see, not only how low he stooped for our good, but also that he hath fully accomplished whatever he undertook, and is now absolved, *John xvii. 4, 5;* and that the Lord's usual way is with his own, as it was with Christ, to make their deep humiliation and lowliness of mind go before their highest exaltation and honour, *Prov. xv. 33;* for Paul doth read previous humiliation in Christ's exaltation, and thinks upon both jointly; "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended?"

5. Then do we think upon Christ's humiliation and abasement aright, when we consider it in its greatest depth and lowest step unto which he demitted himself, even to the lowest parts of the earth; for therein we may see the greatness of his love, the depth of his misery, and the full sufficiency of the price paid by Christ in the state of his humiliation, in order to our delivery; "He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth," by which is not meant the place of the damned, nor any place near to that, where the souls of the patriarchs were before Christ's death, as the papists affirm; this being contrary to Scripture, affirming that Christ's soul was after death to be in heaven, *Luke xxiii. 43;* and that the souls of the patriarchs were there also, *Luke xvi. 22, 23, 25, 26,* but hereby, as I show in the exposition, is meant his conception and burial, with all the other steps of his humiliation intervening.

VER. 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

The apostle, in the explication and application of the cited testimony, doth next show what it expressly holdeth forth, to wit, Christ's ascension; and illustrates it from this, that the person who ascended, though now made man, was the same with him who descended to take on the nature of man. Secondly, that he ascended to the highest heavens, the seat of eternal glory, "far above those visible heavens," not only in situation, but also in duration and glory, and are called the heaven of heavens, *1 Kings viii. 27;* the third heavens, *2 Cor. xii. 3, 4,* and sometimes simply by the name of heavens, *Acts iii. 21.* And thirdly, from the end of his ascending, even to fill all things, not all places, with his bodily presence, (for him must the heavens contain, *Acts iii. 21,*) but that he might fulfil all prophecies concerning himself, and all those parts of his mediatory office, which were yet to be performed in heaven: and particularly that

he might fill his church, and all the members thereof, (which are his all, even his own body, John vi. 45,) with a large and plentiful measure of the gifts and graces of his Spirit, John vii. 39; according as was foretold in the cited testimony.

DOCTRINES.

1. The distinction of natures in Christ after his incarnation, doth not infer a distinction of persons in him; he remaineth one person still: for the apostle speaketh of him after incarnation, as of one: "He that descended, is the same also that ascended."

2. Jesus Christ remaineth one and the same person after his assuming the human nature unto himself with that which he was before, so that neither is the person of God-man Mediator, any third thing made up, or compounded of both those natures, neither did the human nature add any thing, before wanting, to make up, perfect, or work any alteration in the personal subsistence of the Son of God: only the humanity of Christ, being destitute of any personal subsistence of its own, is, as it were, engrafted in the second person of the Godhead, the Son of God, and doth subsist in him; for Paul sheweth that he who ascended, being now God-man, is the same with him who descended before his incarnation: "He that descended, is the same also that ascended."

3. By virtue of this personal union betwixt the divine and human nature of Christ, there ariseth such a communion of the distinct properties of each nature, that those things which are proper only to the one nature, are ascribed to the whole person; for the same person is said here to descend and ascend, though he did descend, to wit, improperly as God, not by change of place, but by assuming to himself the human nature, and did ascend properly by change of place, as he was man, and according to his human nature; "He that descended is the same also that ascended."

4. Then do we profitably think on Christ's exaltation, when we extend ourselves unto the utmost to look upon the height of that honour and glory, unto which the human nature, assumed by Christ, is now exalted; that so we may be the more taken up with admiration, Heb. ii. 6, &c., and the more encouraged in hopes of through-bearing, as knowing that our head and near kinsman is already possessed of glory, and resideth there, as our great and powerful attorney and agent, to mind our everlasting concerns, as his own, Heb. vii. 25; for Paul holdeth forth his exaltation to be considered thus, when instead of what was said in the Psalm, he ascended up on high, he saith here, "He ascended up far above all heavens."

5. Though Christ did furnish his church with a competent measure of gifts and graces, even before his ascension or incarnation, Heb. i. 1, yet it pleased the Lord to suspend the pouring forth of his Spirit in such a large and plentiful measure upon his church both of Jews and Gentiles, until Christ, having overcome and spoiled principalities and powers by his death, had arisen again, ascended, and taken actual possession of his kingdom; that so the glorious state of his church and subjects, as it now is

under the gospel, might not go before, but follow after the glory of their king and head; for, saith he, "He ascended, that he might fill all things."

6. The way of Christ with his own, especially with his church in general, is such, that what is sad and grievous in it, in one respect, is joyous and advantageous unto them in another; for Christ's removal of his bodily presence was sad to his disciples, John xvi. 6, and yet a forerunner of much good; "He ascended, that he might fill all things."

7. So large and inexhaustible is that fountain of fulness in Christ, our exalted Lord, that though all his followers and subjects be but empty things in themselves; yet he can fill, not only one, but all, and all as well as one; yea, and he doth really fill them, even here, to wit, with a fulness answerable to their present state of childhood and imperfection, a fulness of grace in respect of parts, though not of degrees: for this was the end of his ascension, "that he might fill all things."

VER. 11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

The apostle, fourthly, in this first branch of that general argument for union, confirmeth and illustrateth what he spake concerning diversity of gifts given by Christ, by giving an instance thereof, not in gifts, but in the several offices and office-bearers in the church, which is all one as if he had given an instance in the variety of gifts, seeing Christ employeth none in any office but whom he doth furnish in some measure with gifts answerable to the employment. Neither doth he enumerate all those office-bearers which Christ hath appointed in his church, (see others besides, 1 Tim. v. 17, Acts vi. 2, 3,) but only so many as are sufficient to his present scope, even those who labour in the word and sacraments, whose various gifts are most conspicuous in the spiritual edification of the church. Of which he reckoneth five, and saith of them all, that Christ did give them at his ascension, though he did send forth some of those, to wit, the apostles, before then, Matt. x. 1, John xx. 21. The reason whereof is, because not only some were then added to the apostles, as Acts i. 26; ix. 15; but also all of them were then solemnly installed, and publicly confirmed in their office, by Christ, in his visible pouring forth the gifts of the Spirit in an extraordinary measure upon them, Acts ii. 3, 4; of which five, there were three extraordinary office-bearers to continue for a time only, first, apostles, the several characters of which office, see upon Col. i. 1, Doct. 2, to which this one is to be further added, that an apostle behaved to have seen Christ in the flesh, 1 Cor. ix. 1. Secondly, prophets; who those were, see upon Eph. iii. ver. 5. Thirdly, evangelists, not those who wrote the history of the gospel, whereof some were apostles, as Matthew and John; but others, who being called mediately by the apostles, 2 Tim. i. 6, were their

companions in travels, Gal. ii. 1, 3, and sent out by them, as occasion offered, to settle and water such churches as the apostles had planted, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 1 Tim. i. 3, and there to remain, not constantly, but until the apostles should recall them, 2 Tim. iv. 9. Such were Timothy, Titus, Sylvanus, Apollos, and Tychicus, &c. The other two are ordinary office-bearers, pastors and teachers; I say two, though the disjunctive particle "some," be not cast in between them; for they are distinguished, Rom. xii. 7, 8, and the exercise of their respective offices is distinguished also, 1 Cor. xii. 8; so that by the pastors are meant those who, besides their ability to open up the text of Scripture in some measure, are chiefly gifted with the word of wisdom, wisely and powerfully to apply the word for working upon the affections, as the matter requireth; and the teacher is he who is gifted with the word of knowledge, or ability to open up the mind of God in Scripture, establishing truth, and confuting error, without insisting much upon particular application; which office, because of the church's poverty, is confined to the schools, and the ordinary exercise of it before the people left upon the pastor.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one and the same God; so they do all concur in one for bringing about the church's good; and this in a special manner, by sending forth ministers to feed the flock and furnishing them with competent gifts; for what is here spoken of Christ, is sometimes ascribed to God the Father, 1 Cor. xii. 28, and sometimes unto the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 11. "And he gave some apostles," &c.

2. It is the prerogative of Christ, the king and head of his church, to appoint the several sorts of offices and office-bearers in his church; neither is it in the power of any whomsoever, whether kings or churches, to add to, or diminish from, any thing appointed by him herein: for it is the prerogative of Jesus Christ, "to have given some, apostles; some, prophets," &c.

3. As Christ doth put none in office but whom he furnisheth with gifts; so we are not to exercise our gifts in a disorderly way, but within the compass of our stations, and in those offices unto which we are called by God; for so much doth the apostle teach, while proving the variety of gifts, he giveth an instance in those diverse offices wherein those gifts are to be exercised, "And he gave some, apostles; some, prophets," &c.

4. The gifts which God bestoweth upon his public ministers for the work of the ministry, are the prime and chief of all those gifts which the Lord Christ doth bestow upon his church, and much to be preferred to the private gifts of others, in so far, especially, as they are the ordinary mean appointed by God for working saving grace, Rom. x. 14, 15; for therefore is it, that the apostle not only here, but elsewhere, Rom. xii. 6, 1 Cor. xii. 28, being to give an induction of those various gifts bestowed by Christ upon his church, doth begin with, and insist mainly on those gifts which are given to

his public ministers and preachers of the word; "He gave some, apostles; some, prophets."

5. A ministry sent by Christ, and sufficiently furnished with ministerial gifts for the conscientious discharge of that calling, is a singular gift of God unto a people, whereby Christ doth supply the want of his bodily presence among them, and bringeth about the edification of his church as effectually as if he himself were present upon earth, John xiv. 12: for when Christ ascended up far above all heavens, "he gave," in a special gift to his church, and as it were in supply of his absence, "some, apostles; some, prophets."

6. The Lord Christ hath never appointed such an office-bearer in his house as the pope, whom papists call the visible head of the universal church on earth, supplying the room and place of Christ now absent in heaven; nor yet of a lord prelate, commonly called "bishop," who, according to the maintainers of that office, is one intrusted with the actual oversight of many congregations, and of whole provinces, with a degree of authority flowing from their office, over and above all the ministers of Jesus Christ within those bounds: for if Christ had appointed those great offices and office-bearers as necessary in his house, how should the apostle have passed them over, not only in all other places where he speaketh of this purpose, but also here, where he is reckoning forth those gifts and offices which Christ, ascending to heaven, hath appointed to supply in a special manner the want of his bodily presence upon earth? which, without all doubt, should be most supplied by those, if they were of his appointment: and therefore, though the office of ruling elder and deacon be not so necessary to be here mentioned, yet those great offices, the mentioning whereof would have been so subservient to his purpose, could not be well omitted. Now, none of those are here; "for he gave some, apostles; some, prophets, &c."

7. The Lord Christ hath not intrusted all with a public office in his house, but some only, to whom the rest ought to submit themselves, and obey in the Lord, Heb. xiii. 17. Neither are all office-bearers intrusted with one and the same office, and therefore not endued with the same measure of gifts and parts; so that we are not to measure all by some, rejecting others who come not up in all things to those: for "he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists," &c.; "some" only, and not all.

8. The Lord hath always raised, and yet will raise up, men in his church according to what the exigence of the times requireth; and though we have not ground to look for men extraordinary, whether for gifts or office, yet for men singularly assisted in their ordinary stations, when the important affairs of the church do call for such: for here, when there were extraordinary things to be done, the first foundations of the Christian church to be laid, the canon of Scripture to be completed, the Jewish way of religion, once established by God, to be put down, the Lord Christ sendeth forth extraordinary office-bearers, and extraordinarily assisted: for, to bring all this about, "he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some evangelists."

9. So wise and merciful is the Lord Christ,

that he doth not overburden his servants too much; but where their work goeth beyond their strength, he hath sufficiently provided how a part of their burden may be taken on by others: for the work of laying the foundations of the Christian church being too heavy for the twelve apostles, he did allow them co-workers and fellow-helpers, even the prophets and evangelists; "he gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists," &c.

10. Whatever is done in the church of Christ according to his order, though mediately by the hands of men, Christ will own it, as if it were done immediately by himself; which holdeth especially in the church's calling of fit men to the work of the ministry, according to the order appointed by Christ: for he maketh the calling of ordinary pastors and teachers, though it be mediate only and by men, to be from Christ, as well as the immediate extraordinary calling of the apostles: "He gave some, apostles; some, pastors and teachers."

11. As it is needful that both the judgments of people be informed and their affections wrought upon, and as God hath furnished his servants with answerable gifts for effectuating both; so we are not to despise either of those sorts of gifts; neither the sound, plain, able, teaching gift, though it be not so operative or taking upon the affections; nor yet the pithy, moving, pastoral gift, that worketh upon the affections, though it be not accompanied with profound knowledge and great learning in those who have it: for the Lord dispenseth both those gifts, and oftentimes not to the same person; "He gave pastors and teachers."

VER. 12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

The apostle, having thus far enlarged himself upon the first branch of that general argument for union, taken from the diversity of gifts in the church, to wit, because they all came from one and the same author, he doth now fall upon its second branch, enforcing unity, notwithstanding the diversity of gifts and offices, because they are all given for promoting one and the same end; which end is first propounded in this verse, in three different expressions, all tending much to the same purpose, but with some difference in regard of three sorts of persons to whom the ministerial function hath reference. First, in regard of the "saints," or people, the end of the ministry is to "perfect" them, that is, to bring them out of that disorderly, disjointed, and confused frame, posture, and condition wherein they are, and to fix them in a well-ordered, compact, spiritual frame and state, which is attained when they are joined to Christ by faith, and one to another by love: for the word signifieth to prepare, fit, and dispose things in an orderly frame, Rom. ix. 22, and especially such things as were before rent asunder, Mark i. 19, or out of their own due place and order, as disjointed members, with allusion to which the word is used, Gal. vi. 1. Secondly, in regard of themselves, who are in office, and accordingly gifted; the end of their

gifts and office is, that they may labour diligently in all the duties of their calling, which is only a subordinate end, and relative to the other two as a mean. Thirdly, in regard of Christ, it is that all believers, being so perfected and joined together, as stones of a building, by the work of the ministry, may become his mystical body, to whom he will perform all the duties of a head.

DOCTRINES.

1. That several offices and various gifts are all given for promoting one and the same end, and for promoting those ends in particular which are expressed in the text, is a strong argument to keep off emulations and rents, because of those, and to endeavour after unity and peace, seeing division and strife do mar the spiritual orderly frame of the church, divert from the main work of the ministry, and obstruct the edification of the body of Christ, and so do cross those main ends in all respects, for which all gifts and offices are given: for the apostle enforceth unity from the diversity of gifts and offices, upon this consideration, that all are given for the promoting of those ends, even "for perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry," &c.

2. That public gifts and gifted ministers are sent to, or continued in, any place by God, is for the sake of the elect there, and to bring about their salvation; so that though the word be preached and ordinances dispensed, even to reprobates to make them the more inexcusable, and because they are joined in one civil society and external church-fellowship with the elect; yet if God had none of his own to be wrought upon by the ministry in a congregation, place, or nation, it is more than probable he should not send his ordinances there at all: for all the ends of Christ's sending a ministry do relate chiefly to the elect; even "for perfecting the saints, for edifying the body of Christ."

3. Whatever outward civil order may be among a people destitute of the gospel, yet as to their spiritual concerns, they are wholly out of frame, rent, and torn, even a disorderly confused mass and heap, as being at enmity with God, Rom. viii. 7, and destitute of all sound, solid, and spiritual unity among themselves, Rom. iii. 13—15; for seeing the end of the ministry is to "perfect the saints," that is, to bring them to an orderly, spiritual frame, it is supposed that before a ministry be sent unto them, they are not perfect, but wholly out of frame.

4. Even the elect already converted, are sometimes out of frame, their spiritual faculties, as it were, disjointed, and unable to move or stir, Psa. li. 10, and one of them rent asunder from another, through prejudices, passion, love to self-interest, and such like, Acts xv. 39; for otherwise there should be but small need of a ministry toward them, the great end whereof is to place those things which are disorderly in a right frame, to join together things which are rent asunder, to recover strength and motion to those things which are rendered weak by being out of their right place, as the word rendered "perfecting" doth signify: "for perfecting the saints."

5. A public ministry and the exercise thereof, is the ordinary mean appointed by the Lord

Christ for perfecting the saints and edifying the body of Christ, whether by converting those of the elect who are yet in their unregenerate state, Rom. x. 17; or, by confirming and establishing those who are already converted, Col. iv. 12, and making them to grow, Col. i. 28; or restoring them when they are overtaken in a fault, 1 Tim. v. 20; and therefore it is a most necessary ordinance, without which those great ends in an ordinary way cannot be attained: for he maketh the ministerial offices, formerly mentioned, the means of "perfecting the saints, and of edifying the body of Christ."

6. The highest office that is enjoyed by any within the church is only a ministry and service, and not a lordly dominion over the flock of Christ; for he calleth the forementioned offices, even the highest of them, (the office of the apostles itself not being excepted,) a ministry, or service; "for the work of the ministry."

7. Ministers are not called to idleness, or to live like lazy drones, wasting the church's revenue, without executing the office for which it is given. They are called to work, and improve their talents and gifts in that laborious work of perfecting the saints and edifying the body of Christ: for this he maketh the end of those gifts and offices in regard of those to whom they are given, even "the work of the ministry."

8. The gaining of souls to God, and carrying on the work of grace in those who are gained to some perfection, doth meet with so much opposition, what from within, and what from without, what from men, what from devils, and what from a man's own heart, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, that the ministerial office, which is employed for bringing those about, is no easy task. It is a work, and such as, though it be a worthy work, 1 Tim. iii. 1, yet it is a weighty and laborious work; a work that will take up the whole man, and being rightly minded, will give the painful and conscientious minister little time for any other work, 1 Tim. iv. 15. For he casteth this second end relating to the ministers themselves, in the middle betwixt the other two; because it relateth to them, as a mean to the end; and to show it is not naked gifts, or the credit of the office which will bring about those ends, but the painful exercise and discharge of them: "for the work of the ministry."

9. The work of the ministry, if rightly gone about, is a uniting work of the church of Christ; its great end, and to which all its other ends are subordinate, being to unite souls, as so many stones in a building, or as so many members in the body, first, to Christ, the foundation of this building, and head of this body, by bringing them up to believe in him; and next, one to another, by bringing them up to mutual love, and all the duties thereof, and especially to mutual forbearance, and the study of unity and peace: for he maketh this the great and last end of "the work of the ministry," even "the edifying of the body of Christ;" that is the church; (see wherefore it is so called, chap. i. 23.) The word "edifying" is borrowed from masons, whose great work is, having prepared the stones apart, to join them most firmly, both to the foundation and among themselves.

VER. 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

In the next place, he doth several ways illustrate and explain what he presently spake of that great end intended to be brought about by the ministry and ministerial gifts. And first, he illustrateth it in this verse, from the term of its duration, by showing how long (not all those forementioned offices, ver. 11, but) that work of the ministry in edifying the body of Christ, spoken of ver. 12, shall continue and last; the term whereof, in a word, is the day of judgment: and it is set forth by three expressions, the latter whereof is a further explication of the former, and all of them do hold forth that high degree of perfection, which the church shall not obtain before that day; and first, he sheweth that work is to continue until all the elect (some whereof are not yet born, much less called, and some of those who are called, do differ in many things among themselves) do come or meet (for so the word may read) in that complete unity, not only of opinion, but also, and especially, of heart and affection, to be manifested in that most perfect and blessed communion and fellowship, which the saints shall enjoy, both with Christ, and amongst themselves in glory, called the "unity of faith," as having its first rise from faith; however faith, as to the distance from Christ implied in it, shall then cease, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; which grace of faith he describeth to be "the knowledge of the Son of God:" or, as the word signifieth, the "acknowledgement of him," which speaketh somewhat more than our simple knowing of him, even a knowing him as our own, and with a special application to ourselves, and so as we give due honour, respect, and reverence to him: see upon chap. i. ver. 17, Doct. 10. Secondly, he sheweth what unity of faith he meaneth, even that which the church and all her members shall attain to, being come to the state and degree of perfection in the life to come; which state is here called "a perfect man," or a man come to full and perfect age; because that state shall be to the church, and all her lively members, as their ripe and complete age, in comparison of their infancy, childhood and growing age here in the world. Thirdly, he sheweth when the church shall come to her ripe and manly age, to wit, when she attaineth that measure of perfection; (called her stature, with allusion to the ripe age of a man, when he is come to his full stature;) that measure, I say, of perfection, which Christ shall fill them with in glory, or whereby Christ mystical shall be fully complete, there being none of his members then wanting, and all of them come to their perfect growth, or a measure of perfection answering, though not in equality, yet in likeness and conformity, to that fulness of perfection which is in their head Christ, to whom all the members of this mystical body shall be in some measure conformed in glory, 1 Cor. xv. 49. This stature of the fulness of Christ may be taken any or all of those ways, for they all agree in one and the same measure of perfection.

DOCTRINES.

1. The edification of the body of Christ, is a work that shall be continually in motion, and on foot, until all that are given to Christ of the Father, no, not one being wanting, even all the members of this mystical body, be effectually called and united with Christ the head, and among themselves, and every one of them attain to their full and perfect measure of spiritual growth, so that Christ shall never want a church of believers, while the world endureth: for the term, to which that edifying work, mentioned ver. 12, shall continue, is, "Until we all come to the unity of the faith."

2. The ministry of the gospel is a standing ordinance until Christ's second coming; neither are there any other church offices to be given by Christ to the church for edifying his body but those which are already given in the grant of the gospel: and therefore those are to continue either more visibly or hidly in some one place or other, in despite of men and devils, unto the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20; for this work of the ministry in edifying the body, spoken of ver. 12, is to continue "Until we all come to the unity of the faith."

3. There is none, no, not the most eminent saints on earth, who are above the ordinance of the ministry, so as to stand in no need of it, or to be without reach of being bettered by it: even ministers themselves must be wrought upon and edified by this ordinance, otherwise they do not what they ought in saving both themselves and others, 1 Tim. iv. 16; for even Paul reckoneth himself among those whom the ministry was to have its due effects upon, while he saith, not "ye all," but "We all come to the unity of the faith."

4. As the elect by nature are far removed from God, from Christ, and one from another; so their great work, when once converted, should be, and in a great part will be, to tend and advance by degrees towards a complete union and communion with God, and with one another in God, as the great scope they aim at, and the point or centre which they propose unto themselves to meet in: for the former of those is supposed, and the latter expressed, while he saith, "till we all come," or "meet in the unity," &c.

5. This perfect union and communion of all believers with God, and with one another in God, is not attained at the first; yea, not in this life, nor before the resurrection: until then there will be always some alienation and distance, not only from God, 2 Cor. v. 6, but also among themselves, and that both in their judgments and affections, 1 Cor. xiii. 9; for he saith, "till we come in the unity:" which implieth, there will be some time before we come at it, even till the church be a "perfect man" in glory.

6. Diversity of gifts bestowed upon ministers, and the exercise of them in the work of the ministry, is the ordinary mean appointed of God for working up the body of Christ to this unity; and therefore ought not to be occasion unto the people of strife and emulation, schism or faction, 1 Cor. iii. 4; much less should they be improved

by ministers for begetting or entertaining divisions or rents, either among themselves, or in the church of God, Phil. i. 15, 16; for he sheweth the work of the ministry, ver. 12, diversity of offices, ver. 11, and diverse measures of gifts and graces, ver. 7, are all given to promote this unity; and therefore ought not to raise division: "Till we all meet in the unity."

7. The grace of faith, and the exercise thereof, is the way wherein the saints do walk towards this blessed and perfect union; in so far as faith uniteth us to Christ, and through Christ to God and one to another, chap. ii. 15, which union by faith is a step towards, and endeth in, that perfect union and communion with God and all the saints by sight, or sense, which shall be in glory, 1 Pet. i. 9. And therefore the exercise of faith, and closing with Christ, would mainly be pressed by ministers, and sought after by people, as they would attain to unity, entertain it being begun here, or meet in that perfect unity hereafter: for therefore is it called "the unity of faith," as having its rise from that grace; "till we all come in the unity of the faith."

8. As faith in Christ cannot be without the knowledge of Christ, and such a knowledge, as is a real acknowledging of him, implying application and high esteem of him when he is known; so faith cannot find a sure foundation in Christ to rest on, while he be taken up, as God equal with the Father, and consequently endued with sufficient strength and worth for doing all those things, for which the believer employeth him, for he describeth faith to be the "knowledge," or, "acknowledgement of the Son of God."

9. The church and body of Christ, in respect of particular believers, the members of that body, hath its own divine different periods of age, as the infancy of the church and particular believers, so called, because of their childish ignorance and infirmities: this age is spoken of, ver. 14. Next their youth and growing age, when they are making progress in the way of grace towards perfection: this is mentioned, ver. 15; and, lastly, their perfect manly age, when grace is fully perfected in glory, spoken of in this verse. Only they have no declining, fading, or old age, but shall always remain a perfect man unto all eternity, 1 Thess. iv. 17; "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man." See the exposition.

10. As believers ought to aim at no lower degree of perfection than conformity with Christ, their glorious head; so they shall at last attain unto it: they shall be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, as he, Heb. vii. 26; above the reach of all temptations, as he, John xiv. 30; their vile bodies made conform to his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21; and both soul and body confirmed in that glorious state, unto all eternity, even as he, Rom. vi. 9; that so there may be a due proportion between the head and body of mystical Christ: and when all believers are from the fountain of fulness in Christ thus filled with a fulness of perfection, in some measure answerable unto that which is in himself, then, and not till then, hath mystical Christ attained his just stature, proportion, and fulness: he doth in a manner reckon himself imperfect, empty, and

incomplete, so long as one member of his mystical body is wanting: for Paul maketh the measure of the church's perfection, or manly and full stature, to be the fulness of Christ, to wit, that perfection which, flowing from Christ's fulness, shall complete Christ mystical, and be conform to that fulness of perfection which is in Christ: "Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

VER. 14. That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

He doth illustrate the forementioned end of the ministry, next, by showing one chief fruit of that spiritual edification, unto which the work of the ministry is subservient, even the removal of, and preservation from, that which is contrary to it, and namely, from error and false doctrines: the hazard whereof, together with the necessity of guarding against them, is set forth by three similitudes: the first two do express the temper of those who are surprised, or in danger to be surprised by error. First, they are as "little children," to wit, for ignorance of what is right, inconstancy in their choice, and simplicity, or easiness to be deceived, and to credit all. Secondly, they are as ships destitute of skilful masters, tossed, and carried this way and that way with the tide and contrary winds among the waves and rocks; even so are they with the tide and winds of contrary and diverse doctrines and opinions, sometimes fluctuating and uncertain what to choose, sometimes taken with one opinion, and presently changing it with another. The third similitude expresseth the way how such are seduced unto error, to wit, by the pernicious subtilty of seducers, set forth, first, more obscurely, by a comparison taken from the fraud or sleight of gamesters, who have devices by cogging a die, to make it cast up any number they please; so do heretics, by wresting scriptures, force them to speak that seemingly which maketh for the defence of their error, 2 Pet. iii. 16; for the word rendered "sleight of men," signifieth "the crafty deceiving of men." Next, more plainly, while that sleight, or deceiving, is called "cunning craftiness," to wit, in heretics and seducers: the word signifieth a singular dexterity to do mischief of any kind, acquired by long use and great meddling in all affairs. And lastly, he sheweth the end to which this cunning craftiness doth tend, and that wherein it is exercised most, even in a subtle and compendious way of deceiving the simple and drawing them from truth to error: for the words do read in "cunning craftiness, tending to a compendious subtle art of deceiving," or, to deceive by a compendious art.

Hence, learn, 1. One singular mean ordained by God for preserving us from the infection of dangerous errors and subtle seducers, is the work of the ministry; and therefore the work of ministers is not only to press holiness, and to reprove vice, but also to contend for the truth, stop

the mouth of gainsayers, and guard the Lord's people against infection from dangerous errors: and people ought to cleave unto their faithful ministers, as they would be preserved from being made a prey to seducing spirits: for Paul doth hold this forth as one fruit of the work of the ministry, mentioned, ver. 12, even, "that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine."

2. Spiritual edification, and walking towards perfection in glory, doth call for not only holiness of life, but also orthodoxy in point of truth; heresy and error being as great impediments in that spiritual building, and as palpable deviations from the way to heaven and glory, as profanity and vice, 2 Pet. ii. 1; for having spoken of that great end of the ministry, the edification of the body of Christ, ver. 12, as the way to perfection in glory, ver. 13, he doth here speak of infection by error and heresy, as impediments of that edification, and therefore to be removed; "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro."

3. The most holy and able ministers are not more ready to press the sense of human frailty, with the necessity of keeping a strict watch against it upon others, than they are to take with it, and to watch over it in themselves: for even Paul includeth himself, while he saith, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro:" which implieth an acknowledgment, that, at least, he was once such a child, and that it was necessary for him, as well as others, to quit that childish temper.

4. As the renewed children of God are once babes in Christ, and weak in all the parts of the new man, even in knowledge, prudence, patience, and other graces; so they must not be always such, but are to be growing upwards towards perfection; for the first of those is implied and the other expressed, while he saith, "That we henceforth be no more children."

5. Proneness to error and easiness to be carried away with every doctrine which pretendeth to truth, is a mark of one who is not grown in grace, and but a babe in Christ, if he be renewed at all: for he calleth those "children," who are "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine."

6. That errors and heresies are not less damnable and dangerous than other sins, appeareth from this, that the soul's hazard from these is expressed by the hazard of masterless ships tossed by contrary winds among rocks or beds of sand, while he saith, "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine."

7. The spirit of error is always turbulent, and when suffered to walk abroad, doth raise most strange commotions, both in the public state of the church, while hereby the lovers of truth are called publicly to contend for it, Jude ver. 3, and in the hearts of private Christians, chiefly those who are weak and unsettled, and hereby made to fluctuate among the rocks of several opinions, and sometimes at last to split upon some one error or other, Gal. i. 6; for so much is implied, while he compareth heretical doctrines to the boisterous winds which drive the ship of the church "to and fro with every wind of doctrine."

8. There is no erroneous doctrine so hazardous and damnable, but Satan will find out some active spirits to spread it, and to seduce others unto the embracing of it: for those are the men here spoken of, by whose sleight and cunning craftiness the winds of false doctrine are made to blow, and carry children to and fro; "tossed by the sleight of men."

9. As those whom Satan engageth to carry on a course of error and heresy in a church, are usually men of parts and gifts, exceeding far in abilities the generality of the Lord's people, whom they intend to seduce, and as far as men of age and understanding go beyond simple children and babes; so those whom Satan thus engageth, do usually prove men void of conscience, and stand not much upon fraud or falsehood, providing they may gain their point: for the apostle calleth them "men" in opposition to those whom formerly he called "children," and sheweth them to be such men as did make use of sleight and cogging craftiness, and a subtle compendious art of deceiving, for carrying on their point; "By the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

10. Though heretical spirits and seducers of others are men void of conscience, yet they make it their great work to hide their knavery, and to appear that which they are not, by their large pretences to conscience and piety, 2 Cor. xi. 15, hereby to deceive the simple, and to carry on their woful design the more securely under that cover, Rom. xvi. 18; for he compareth them to cunning gamesters, who carry the matter so dexterously, that their fraud and knavery do not appear: "by the sleight of men." He alludeth to subtle cogs of dice, as said is.

11. Heretical spirits, and ringleaders of error, are usually more than ordinarily assisted in their woful work, and so as they fall upon dexterous means which they pursue incessantly, and are attended with marvellous success oftentimes in so doing; the Lord permitting Satan so to act them, and to act by them for heightening the trial, and making a more speedy and thorough discovery of the instability of people's spirits by those means; for the expressions here used do imply their more than ordinary assistance in all those: "by the sleight of men, their cunning craftiness," or singular dexterity to do any mischief, and "their lying in wait to deceive," or their deceiving by a compendious subtle art.

12. However subtle seducers make a fair show of reason, Scripture, piety, and humility, for procuring credit to their errors, Col. ii. 23, yet the strong and only prop whereupon error leaneth, and wherein its great strength doth lie, is nothing else but vanity, falsehood, subtle craftiness and deceit; for Paul sheweth that these are the arms of heretics whereby they defend their errors, even "winds of doctrines, sleight of men, cunning craftiness, and lying in wait to deceive."

13. That great measure of parts and gifts with which heretical seducers are frequently indued, their unwearied diligence in making use of these their deceits, falsehood, and sleights for gaining their purpose, and the more than ordinary success which they are attended with in trying

times, ought not to discourage the weakest of the Lord's people, or make them despair of standing out against their assaults, but rather incite them to watchfulness, to seek after knowledge, a spirit of discerning, solidity in judgment, and stability in truth; that so in the strength of the Lord they may resist their activity and wiles: for the latter part of the verse hath an indirect argument in it for pressing the duty contained in the former, even that "henceforth we be no more children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine," and that because they had to do with the "sleight of men, the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive."

VER. 15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even Christ*:

He doth illustrate the fore-mentioned end of the ministry, thirdly, from another fruit of that spiritual edification, unto which the work of the ministry is also subservient, even to growth in grace, or that real believers, by speaking the truth, (or rather, as the word signifieth, by "cleaving to the truth" of heavenly doctrine,) and by making conscience of the duties of love and good works, as the fruit of their sincerity in adhering to truth, may grow up, and make progress in all Christian virtues, until they attain to their full stature and height of growth, even such a measure of conformity with Christ, as they be in a manner transformed in him, and become most perfectly one with him, whom he calleth here, as often elsewhere, (see upon chap. i. 22,) "the head," to show a reason why believers should grow up in him, and to thorough conformity with him; even that so the members of this mystical body may be in some measure proportionable to their head.

DOCTRINES.

1. The ordinance of the ministry is appointed of God, not only to awaken those who are yet in nature, and drive them to Christ, Eph. v. 14, but also for the good of those who are already converted, even to make them grow up in grace until they come to perfection; and therefore none, who live on earth, can justly account themselves to be above this ordinance; for the apostle sheweth that also is one end of the work of the ministry, that those who are already quickened by it, "may grow up into him."

2. The work of edification intended to be brought about by the ordinance of the ministry, is not attained upon souls, though they be preserved free from error, except they also know the truth, adhere to it, and be growing up in grace, and in making conscience of all the duties of a holy life; for Paul, having mentioned one fruit of that spiritual edification, mentioned, ver. 12, to be freedom from error and infection from false teachers, ver. 14, he here addeth another, that "speaking," or "cleaving to truth in love we may grow up into him in all things."

3. Our making conscience to grow in grace, is a sovereign remedy against the hazard of being surprised with error, and tossed to and fro with

every wind of doctrine, in so far as then we are so much busied about our heart, that we have not leisure to be taken up with vain and giddy notions of an unsettled head; for Paul, having dejected them from being as children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, subjoineth, as a preservative from that unsettled temper, "but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up."

4. It is not sufficient for those who live under the drop of ordinances, to attain to the being of grace, so as they can prove by evident marks that they have grace; but they must also labour to grow in grace: for hereby we glorify God, and speak to the commendation of our Lord's table, whereat we feed, John xv. 8. Hereby we attain to the enjoyment of many rich privileges, which otherwise we are deprived of, 1 John iv. 18, and hereby also we are more enabled to ride out against a storm in trying times; as appeareth from the connexion of these two verses, teaching, that babes in Christ and children are tossed to and fro with every wind, when grown and growing Christians will ride it out; for Paul, teaching that the end of the ministry is to make believers grow, doth show they ought to grow, while he saith, "but speaking the truth in love, we may grow."

5. As we do then sincerely adhere to the truth of heavenly doctrine, when we make evident our so doing by walking in all the duties of love, both to God and our neighbour; (for faith worketh by love, Gal. v. 6;) so our love is then truly Christian, and not a fleshly lust, or moral virtue only, when it is grounded upon truth, and the result of our adhering to it by faith; for therefore Paul conjoineth these two, making the latter, as it were, the result of the former, while he saith, "but speaking," or "cleaving to the truth in love."

6. That Christians may grow in grace, it is most necessary they labour to have both their understanding enlightened with truth, and their heart and affections inflamed with love, without either of which our growth is not Christian and spiritual, but either superstitious and blind, even a growth in error, if the understanding be not enlightened; or growth in pride, conceit, self-love, and arrogance; if the head only being filled with light, our affections be not inflamed with love to God and our neighbour; for therefore he prescribeth, that "by speaking the truth in love, we should grow up."

7. This Christian growth must not only be in one thing, but in all things; in so far as grace must be growing, not only in all the parts of the soul, understanding, will, and affections; but the whole man also and all the parts thereof must grow according to all the ordinary dimensions, or in all Christian virtues and duties, both of our general and particular calling, 2 Pet. i. 5: even as it is in living bodies, which grow equally and proportionally in all their parts of length, breadth, height, and depth: "That we may grow up in all things," saith he.

8. Then do Christians grow as they ought, when they are in a perpetual motion towards Christ, so as to be daily more and more like him, incorporate in him, and one with him; that full conformity with Christ, and that most perfect

union and communion with him, which shall be attained in glory, being the mark and scope toward which they tend, and without attaining whereof they do not sit down satisfied, as if they had enough: for, saith he, "we may grow up into him."

9. Though there ought to be a spiritual emulation among Christians, so as to strive who may grow most and outstrip others, 1 Cor. xiv. 12, yet there should be no division, envious strife, or carnal emulation among them upon this account, so as to envy the progress of others, or cast stumbling-blocks in their way to retard them, but an harmonious on-going and rejoicing in the progress one of another; seeing they are to grow, as the parts of one body under one head, Christ: for so much doth Paul here teach, "We may grow up into him, which is the head, even Christ."

VER. 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The apostle doth illustrate the forementioned end of the ministry, fourthly, and jointly enforceeth the study of love and unity, by showing how all gifts and offices do tend to the edifying of the body, and furtherance of that growth whereof he spake, ver. 15, while he describeth Christ the head, presently spoken of, from his influence upon, and relation to the church, his body, wherein he alludeth to a natural living body, and the way how it, being orderly made up of its several members, joined together by nerves and sinews, doth receive life, motion, nourishment, and growth from the head and heart, by the benefit of those bonds and ligaments, whereby the particular members do not only receive life and nourishment unto themselves, but do also convey them unto others, so that every member doth receive due increase, and thereby the whole doth come to maturity and growth. In allusion to which way of the natural growth of the natural body, he sheweth, first, that by virtue of spiritual influence drawn from Christ, who is as the head and heart of the mystical body, the whole body, to wit, that which is militant on earth, or all sincere believers, the true and lively members of this body, are "joined fitly," or orderly, every one in his own place and station, and also firmly or compactly with Christ, and among themselves. Secondly, that they are thus joined, by the means of spiritual joints and sinews, whereby we are to understand every thing that joineth believers with Christ, and among themselves; and they are either joints and bonds of inward union and communion, to wit, the Spirit, on Christ's part, and faith and love on ours; or of external union, to wit, the word, sacraments, and those functions and offices which Christ hath appointed in his house: yea, and also all natural and civil relations, when they are sanctified; and they are all called "joints of subministration, or supply," (for the words read bet-

ter so than as they are rendered, "by that which every joint supplieth,") to show, that those do serve, not only to conjoin us with Christ, and among ourselves, but also for channels and instruments of communication, by which spiritual nourishment and matter of growth is conveyed both unto ourselves and others. He sheweth, thirdly, that the whole members, and every one of them, being thus conjoined, do not only themselves, by virtue of that furniture and spiritual nourishment, communicated from Christ by the means of those joints or bonds, make increase and grow, but also make the whole body thus conjoined to grow, and this "according to the effectual working" of the Holy Ghost, whereby those joints, or means of conveying spiritual nourishment, are blessed and made effectual to the effect mentioned; which effectual working and blessing of increase and nourishment following upon it, is not communicated unto the members or parts without measure, as it was to Christ the head, John iii. 34, or unto all alike, but "in the measure of every part" or member, that is, such a measure as Christ judgeth sufficient and most convenient to every member, according to the place and function which they hold in the body, and the use which he is to make of them for the good of the body. And, lastly, he sheweth the end of the growth and increase of the whole body in all its members, to be not so much the good and advantage of the particular members, as the advancement and edification of the body itself, and of the particular members only, in so far as their edification and growth is carried along in, and contributeth for the edification of the body, and that this floweth from the force and power of the grace of love in all the members, which doth not look to itself only, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, but maketh every part contribute all what it is and can do for the benefit of others, and common good of the whole.

Hence learn, 1. As Christ and believers make up one mystical body, whereof he is head and they members, (see upon chap. i. 22, 23,) so all things requisite unto believers to make them a body, do flow from Christ: their union, order, bonds of union, spiritual nourishment, and instruments of communication, whereby it is conveyed, their growth, and measure of their growth, and all is from him, as the apostle doth here fully teach: "from whom the whole body," &c.

2. As there is a most orderly and firm union of all the members of this body with their head, and among themselves: so this union is necessary in order to their receiving spiritual nourishment and making increase thereby, even as it is in the natural body, a member cut off or separated from the rest cannot be nourished: for he saith, "the whole body fitly joined and compacted, doth make increase:" the first word, "fitly joined," doth express the orderly frame and proportion of all the members in this union; the second, "compacted," expresseth the firmness of this union.

3. As there are joints and bonds both of the internal and external union of this body, to wit, such as are held forth in the exposition, even the Spirit of God, with his special graces and common gifts; so that God doth make use of all those, both as bonds of union, and instruments of com-

munication, whereby he conveyeth spiritual nourishment unto the respective members, is a strong argument to scare us from dividing or rending upon these, or because of the diversity of those in the several members: for, he saith, "the whole body is compacted by every joint;" and he calleth them, "joints of supply," whereby furniture is conveyed; his general scope wherein is to enforce the study of unity, notwithstanding of diversity of graces, gifts, and offices, "compacted by that which every joint supplieth," or "every joint of supply."

4. There is no true member of this body either dead, or idle, or living, and working only to itself, but what life or nourishment it hath received from the head, that it doth endeavour to communicate unto others: for, he saith, there is "an effectual working from the Lord in every member, according to which it maketh increase," not only of itself, but "of the body."

5. As there is no member of this body, which receiveth the essential operation and gifts or graces of the Holy Spirit without measure, and as all receive some measure, less or more, so it is the duty of all and every one to contribute for the good of others, and especially for the advantage of the whole body, not by extending themselves beyond their measure, but according to it; that being all which God requireth: for, he saith, the "whole body," or all the several members of the body, "do make increase of the body, according to the effectual working, in the measure of every part."

6. As it is not our improving of our measure of gifts and graces received, which, of itself, and without the effectual operation and blessing of God's Spirit, will bring about the spiritual good and advantage either of ourselves or others; so we ought not on this pretence to lie by doing nothing, but are to make use of our measure received, and depend upon the effectual operation of God's Spirit for a blessing to our so doing: for he saith, increase is made of the body according to both those, the Spirit's effectual operation, and the activity of every part or member, according to its measure, even, "according to the effectual working, in the measure of every part."

7. As all the lively members of this body do make increase, and grow in gifts and graces; so that is only true growth, and a growth whereof Christ the head is fountain and author, which addeth somewhat to the whole body, and bringeth advantage to the church in common, but not that growth which seemeth to bring some benefit to a few, with the disadvantage of the rest: for "the whole body," or every member of the body, "maketh increase," not only of itself, but also "of the body," saith he.

8. As there is no such degree of growth attained here, neither by the church in general, nor its lively members in particular, but there are degrees yet wanting of their full and just stature; so the measure of growth, and increase already received, should be improved by us for attaining a further degree of growth and advantage, not only to ourselves, but also to others, chiefly to the edification of the whole body: for he saith, "every member maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself:" so that the increase

received is to be improved for attaining more, even further edification.

9. The more a man do find himself inclined and constrained to improve in his station, and according to his measure, all his receipts, whether of saving graces, or common gifts, to the spiritual advantage of others, and chiefly for the common good of the whole body, he may the more certainly conclude, that he hath the grace of sincere love and charity rooted in his heart, and is acted by it: for he maketh "love" the impulsive cause, why the several members do improve all their receipts for promoting the edification of the whole church, while he saith, "it maketh increase to the edifying of itself in love."

VER. 17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

The apostle (being in the second part of the chapter to dehorth them from all impiety and profanity in the general, contrary to that walking worthy of their vocation, pressed, ver. 1,) giveth an example of that wickedness from which he dehortheth them, in the conversation of those other Gentiles who were yet unconverted, and living in paganism. And, first, while he doth most seriously and under a grave obtestation "by the Lord Jesus Christ," as they would answer to him, and evidence their esteem of him, dehorth them from walking as those other Gentiles, he giveth a short sum of that godless conversation of theirs, calling it a "walking in the vanity of the mind," that is, a following and practising of whatsoever their unrenewed understanding and mind did teach and prescribe: to which he ascribeth vanity, and calleth the mind of unrenewed men "vain," because it is empty of the knowledge of God in Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 14, and what knowledge it hath of God, or of right and wrong, is nothing but evanishing notions, Rom. i. 21, and wholly unprofitable, as to the attaining of life and salvation, Rom. i. 20; for a "vain thing," according to the common and Scripture use of the word, is an empty thing, Isa. xli. 29, an evanishing thing, Prov. xxxi. 30, and a thing unprofitable to attain the end intended, Psal. xxxiii. 17.

DOCTRINES.

1. To live in a course of profanity, and to be a member of Christ's mystical body, drawing life, nourishment, and growth from Christ the head, are wholly inconsistent: if the one be, the other cannot be; seeing profanity of life is not only directly opposite to that new life of grace, which all the members of that body do live, but also doth wholly obstruct the passages betwixt the head and the members, whereby spiritual influence for life and growth should be conveyed, 1 John i. 6; for the apostle, from what he spake of influence for life and growth conveyed from Christ, the head, to all the members, doth infer here, that therefore and as they would evidence themselves lively members of that body, so they would abandon profanity, while he saith, "This I say therefore, that ye walk not as other Gentiles."

2. Ministers ought to be serious in pressing the duties of sanctification upon the Lord's people, not only simply exhorting, but sometimes most gravely obtesting them by that which is dearest to them: whereby the Lord's people may know that their obedience to what is pressed, is no trifling matter, but such as their eternal wellbeing is most highly concerned in: for therefore doth Paul not only say and exhort them, but also testify and obtest them "in the Lord, that they walk not henceforth as other Gentiles."

3. Our long continuance in sin already, is so far from being an argument in reason to make us hold on in that course for the time coming, that, upon the contrary, this very same consideration should be a strong argument to shame us from it: for so much is implied in his saying "that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles:" as if he had said, Ye have done so hitherto, therefore do so no more. See 1 Pet. iv. 3.

4. Our turning to God in earnest to expect life and salvation from him through Jesus Christ, doth call for, and will be attended with, another sort of conversation than what we formerly had before conversion, or that natural men, dead in sins and trespasses, for the present have: for Paul exhortheth these converted Ephesians not to walk as they themselves sometimes did, nor as the unconverted Gentiles at present did; "I testify," saith he, "that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk."

5. Sense of mercy received from God, is a strong incitement unto duty toward God: for he doth not obscurely hint at God's mercy in separating them from the common lot of other Gentiles, that so they may be the more incited to eschew what might dishonour him; "that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles."

6. The vileness of sin is such, that it cannot be sufficiently expressed, and so expressed as to make us abhor it, by doctrine or word-speaking: therefore it is sometimes profitable to take a look of it in its vileness, power and tyranny, as it manifesteth itself in the lives of unrenewed men, who are captive slaves unto it; providing we so look to it, as to make us abhor it, and carry at a greater distance from it: for therefore doth Paul hold forth a map of that wickedness, which he dehortheth them from, in the example of those unconverted Gentiles, that by seeing of it they might the more abhor it; "That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk."

7. The conversation of all men unrenewed, is vain and fruitless, as spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not, Isa. lv. 2; for he speaketh of all the unconverted Gentiles, "that they walk in vanity."

8. Whatever vanity or wickedness is in the outward conversation of a natural man, it doth wholly flow from the vanity of the mind and understanding within; and as the mind is, so will the conversation be: and therefore even the mind itself, the chief seat of reason, is corrupted and vain, and so vain, that from thence doth flow corruption and vanity to the whole man: for he ascribeth the vanity of their walking to the vanity of their mind; "As other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind," saith he.

VER. 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart :

Next, that the apostle may the more effectually deter them from walking as these other Gentiles did, he doth more largely and distinctly set forth that vain and godless conversation of theirs, by showing several branches and degrees thereof, both inward in their understanding and affections, and outward in their life and conversation : and, first, he sheweth, that "their understanding" and knowing part, or that part of it, whereby men do reason, inferring one thing from another, (for so the word signifieth,) was wholly blind and darkened, to wit, as to those things which relate to God and heaven, 1 Cor. i. 21; whatever was their understanding and quickness of judgment in other things, Gen. iv. 21, 22, yet in those things they were altogether vain and wild, Rom. i. 21. And, secondly, that they were estranged from and wholly destitute of "the life of God," or that spiritual life begun in regeneration, John iii. 3, and consisting in the saving knowledge of God, and the several pieces of God's image, Col. iii. 10, called the "life of God;" because not only God is the author of it, as he is of our natural life, but also it floweth, both in its being and operation, from the gracious presence of God dwelling in us by his Spirit, Gal. ii. 20. And, thirdly, he sheweth that the cause of those former two, was their ignorance of God, and of those things belonging to the worship of God and their own salvation, to wit, both simple ignorance, or want of the knowledge of those things; which ignorance is in all by nature, and ignorance affected and delighted in, whereby the things of God are judged foolishness, 1 Cor. ii. 14; from which ignorance of theirs did flow a further degree of darkness in the understanding, and of alienation from the life of God, than what was natural unto them. And, fourthly, that this their ignorance, with both the forementioned effects, did flow from "their blindness," or rather, as the original doth read, "hardness of heart," whereby their heart, or that part of the soul, which chooseth and refuseth good or evil, did obstinately and against all means used to the contrary, refuse the light of God which was proffered unto them, and were wholly inflexible to good, being obdured and hardened, not only naturally from their birth, Psa. li. 5, but also voluntarily by themselves, Exod. viii. 15, and judicially by God, Exod. ix. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. That the vileness of sin may be sufficiently seen, and so as we may abhor and detest it, it is not sufficient to take a general view of it, and in the bulk, except we also dive into the particular branches, pieces, and degrees of it, and by ripping up the womb of that abominable monster, look upon the vile entrails of it, that so we may be made to detest and hate it with a perfect hatred : for therefore Paul, being to deter these Ephesians from walking as the Gentiles, doth not only give a brief sum of their wickedness in the bulk,

ver. 17, but also here, and ver. 19, doth more distinctly lay open the several branches and degrees of it; "Having the understanding darkened," &c.

2. Man, considered in his natural state, is so vile and loathsome by reason of sin, that being rightly anatonized and deciphered, there is nothing to be seen in him but what may make himself and others to abhor him; there being no part of him, neither in soul nor body, free from those wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores which sin hath brought upon him, as appeareth by this discovery, which in these two verses the Spirit of God by Paul maketh of him: "his understanding is darkened, his heart hardened, his conscience past feeling," &c., for he speaketh this of all the Gentiles, who were not yet converted, and consequently of all men in their unrenewed state: and though all such have not arrived at the utmost height of that wickedness, which some of those expressions hold forth; yet that vain mind, spoken of, ver. 17, which is the root of all the rest, is in every unrenewed man, 1 Cor. ii. 14, and every such man is posting towards all that wickedness here expressed: yea, and would arrive at the utmost height of all, if restraining grace did not hinder him, Gen. xx. 6, and therefore in God's sight he may be justly charged with all; "Having the understanding darkened," &c.

3. As every man by nature is wholly unskilful to discern the things of God, or to improve those lurking principles of the knowledge of a God-head, and of a right and wrong remaining after the fall, Rom. i. 10, by drawing solid conclusions from them for rules to direct him in the matter of worship and walking in the way to salvation; so this unskilfulness and darkness of his doth daily increase, and the longer he liveth and exerciseth himself in finding out what is right and acceptable to God in those things, by the direction and guidance of his natural light only, he is the further from the mark; for he speaketh of a further darkening of their understanding, than what was natural to them, even that which did flow from ignorance and hardness of heart, as is clear from the construction of the words; "Having their understanding darkened, through the ignorance that is in them."

4. As all men did once in their common root and first father Adam partake of the life of God, consisting in God's image, Eccl. vii. 29, and are now, by Adam's fall, from their very conception and birth, deprived of it, Rom. v. 12, 13, 14; so the longer they live in their unrenewed state, they are the more estranged from it, while every sin they commit doth make them in a further degree incapable of it; for he speaketh for a further degree of alienation from the life of God, than what was natural to them, even that which was afterward contracted by their ignorance and hardness of heart; "Being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them."

5. Hardness of heart is a woful evil, and the root and fountain of several other evils, in so far as when a man doth obstinately refuse light, and walketh contrary to light, and so hardeneth his heart to do mischief, he thereby provoketh the

Lord to give him over to ignorance, and to lose the small measure of knowledge which he formerly had, Rom. i. 21; and thus hardness is the cause of ignorance, and being thus both hardened in heart, and blinded in mind, he is further removed and estranged from the life of God, which consisteth in the saving knowledge of God in Christ, John xvii. 3; and his understanding and reason rendered more dark and unskilful to find out what is truth or error, right or wrong; the common principles which were left in him after the fall concerning those things, being now, through a continued custom of obstinacy in sin, almost wholly obliterated and blotted out; for if we look exactly to the construction of the words, we shall find that the blindness or hardness of their hearts, is mentioned as the cause of that ignorance which was in them, and both hardness and ignorance, as the cause of their "alienation from the life of God," and "the darkening of their understandings."

VER. 19. Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

He doth here set forth some other and those higher branches and degrees of their impiety, profanity, and godless conversation, which did follow upon and flow from the former; as 1. they had lost all remorse of conscience, fear of God's judgment, and so did sin without inward check or challenge; and secondly, which followed upon the former, they gave themselves, with the full consent of their will and sensual [force] of their affections, to think upon and delight in the fulfilling of their lascivious, petulant, and filthy lusts; and thirdly, which was the result of all the rest, they acted all sort of uncleanness with a sort of greediness, and as it were, striving who should do most mischief for a prize and reward.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though original sin hath seized upon the whole soul, understanding, will, and affections; yet the Lord hath kept so much of the knowledge of himself, and of right and wrong in the understanding of natural men, as they may know in many things when they sin and do evil, and so much of conscience, as to accuse or excuse according to the nature of the fact, Rom. ii. 15; whereupon followeth either grief or joy in their affections: for while he saith, they were "past all feeling," and lost all remorse, he implieth they once had it, before they came to that height.

2. Wicked men may arrive to such a height of sin, as to have no sense of sin, no grief, nor check, nor challenge from conscience for it; for this is to pass feeling, which Paul affirmeth of those Gentiles; "who being past feeling."

3. As one degree of sin maketh way for another; so in particular, hardness of heart, and obstinacy in sin, do eat out the edge of conscience, making it wholly senseless and stupid, so that it giveth neither check nor challenge for sin: for upon their hardness of heart did follow that which is here affirmed; "Who being past feeling."

4. A watching conscience, doing its duty, is the strongest restraint from sin: and where that is not, all other restraints will serve for little purpose; for upon their "being past feeling," he saith, "they gave themselves over to lasciviousness."

5. When men do give themselves without check and restraint to think upon their sin with delight, they cannot choose but fall out in the outward act of that sin, though it were never so gross; for upon their "giving themselves over to lasciviousness," they "gave themselves also to work all uncleanness."

6. For a man to be given over to lasciviousness and to fulfil his beastly lusts without all check or challenge, it argueth a great height of impiety, and such as speaketh a man ignorant of God, judicially hardened in heart, and altogether past feeling; for he maketh this the result of all the forementioned branches of their wickedness, even that "they gave themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all wickedness."

7. As upon senseless stupidity of conscience, through frequent resisting of light, there followeth an unsatiableness in sinning, especially in the sin of uncleanness, that the more a man doth sin, he is the more eager upon sin, and can never have enough of it; so when a man cometh to this, he is then arrived at the greatest height of sin, unto which ever the heathens, destitute of the knowledge of God, did attain; for this is the highest step of all, that through hardness of heart, being past feeling, they did not only simply act uncleanness, but "gave themselves to work all uncleanness with greediness."

VER. 20. But ye have not so learned Christ;

He presseth the former exhortation, set down, ver. 17, from this; that the saving knowledge of Christ, wherein they were instructed, was inconsistent with such a licentious life as those other Gentiles lived in.

DOCTRINES.

1. The anatomising of that vile monster, sin, and setting it forth in its blackest colours, is not alone sufficient to scare the Lord's people from it; but such is the interest which sin hath in the best, and such is their proneness to it, that besides, there must be other strong arguments made use of to keep them from falling in it: for the apostle having set forth the vileness of sin at length, seeth it necessary here to superadd another argument to enforce the former debortation; "But ye have not so learned Christ," saith he.

2. As the giving of loose reins to sin, is inconsistent with the state of grace and the saving knowledge of Christ; so there is no argument more prevalent with a gracious heart to keep them up from profanity and looseness, than the thorough inculcating of this truth; for among many other arguments, Paul maketh choice of this; "But ye have not so learned Christ."

3. As true believers must be scholars daily, learning somewhat, so the sun of all they have to learn and know, is Christ; he being the end of the law, Rom. x. 4, and the great subject of

the gospel, Col. i. 27, in whom the promises are yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20; for, saith he, "ye have not so learned Christ."

4. There is no remedy or cure of our natural corruptions, and of all those other filthy wounds and sores that follow upon it, but in Christ Jesus being truly known, embraced, and made use of, as he is set forth in the doctrine of the gospel. No moral precepts, though enforced by most strong and moving considerations, can reach the root of this woful disease; for he opposeth their learning Christ, as the alone antidote against that vanity of mind, with all its branches and degrees formerly spoken of; "But ye have not so learned Christ."

5. Accordingly as we are instructed and learned by Christ, so we ought to walk and put that knowledge, which we have of him and from him, in practice; for his scope is to prove they should not walk so, because "they had not learned Christ so."

VER. 21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

He doth here limit the former reason, by showing the knowledge which they had of Christ, was inconsistent with such a licentious life, only upon this supposal, if so by learning Christ preached, they had been inwardly taught and instructed by Christ himself in the truth, and "as the truth was in him," who did not only know the truth, but also practised what he knew, so that his life was a true copy of that holiness which is taught in the gospel, Matt. xi. 29.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not every sort of learning Christ, or of knowledge that may be had of Christ, which excludeth profanity, and is inconsistent with a licentious life. Many do in a sort learn him and know him, who abuse that knowledge they have of him, for making them sin the more securely, Rom. vi. 1, even those who turn the grace of God to wantonness, Jude, ver. 4; for he sheweth what he spake of that inconsistency, which is between learning Christ and the practice of profanity, doth not always hold, while he addeth this limitation, "if so be ye have heard him."

2. Whatever grounds a minister hath for charity to judge of all or any of the Lord's people committed to his charge, as truly gracious; yet he ought to express that his judgment of them, with so much wariness and caution, as ground may be given unto them to inquire in their own condition and search, whether it be so; for Paul having, ver. 20, professed his charitable judgment of them, that they had not so learned Christ, he giveth a limitation here, whereby they might try if it was so: "If so be that ye have heard him."

3. That learning of Christ, and knowledge of him, which is the only remedy against the power of inherent corruption, is begotten in us by the ordinary mean of hearing him preached, and set forth in the public ministry of the gospel, Rom.

x. 14, 15; for this is one piece of that condition, which is required to the learning of Christ thus, even "if so ye have heard him."

4. The hearing of Christ preached by sent ministers, is not alone sufficient in order to this effectual learning of him, but Christ himself must teach us inwardly and effectually by his Spirit, else we cannot so learn him; for this is another piece, and the main piece of that condition required antecedently to their learning of Christ thus, "if so ye have been taught by him."

5. Then do we rightly and savingly learn truth, when the knowledge of truth attained by our learning, is such as Christ's knowledge was, to wit, not theoretic and speculative only, but practical and operative; for so was his knowledge of truth, Psa. xl. 8, and they were to be taught by him, "as the truth is in Jesus," else they had not so learned Christ.

VER. 22. That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

He doth next show what it is to be taught by Christ, as the truth is in him; and thereby confirmeth what he said, ver. 20, that the saving knowledge of Christ is inconsistent with a licentious life, in so far as this effectual learning of Christ, and knowledge of him, requireth from, and effectually worketh in, the person so instructed, three things. The first whereof is in this verse, to wit, a daily study to put off and mortify the old man, whereby is not meant the substance of a man's soul and body, nor yet the natural and essential faculties of the soul, (for those of necessity do always remain, until the man cease to be,) but that natural and inbred corruption which hath infected and polluted all those; which inbred corruption he sheweth had manifested itself in their former godless conversation, and doth grow daily worse and more corrupt, yea, and by little and little bringeth corruption and destruction upon the whole man, both in soul and body, where it is given way to in its deceitful lusts: for so much doth he intend while he saith, it "is corrupt according," or by "deceitful lusts." Now, this inbred corruption is here called the old man, and the mortifying of it is called a putting of it off, by a metaphor taken from the laying aside and casting off of old garments. See the reasons for both, upon Col. iii. 9, Doct. 1.

Hence, learn, 1. So much may we reckon ourselves to know of Christ, and to be taught by Christ, as we do practise according to what we know. Those only are best scholars in Christ's school, who are most tender walkers: for Paul sheweth, that to learn Christ, and to be taught by him, is, in a word, to practise all the duties of an holy life, even "that ye put off the old man," &c. saith he.

2. Then do we set about the duties of sanctification in the right order, when we begin at the work of mortification in the first place, and thence proceed to the positive duties of a new life: the plants of righteousness will not thrive in an unhumiliated, proud, impenitent heart, John

v. 44; for Paul sheweth the first part of this lesson, is, to "put off concerning the former conversation, the old man."

3. Then do we carry on the work of mortification right and to good purpose, when we single not out some one sin, passing by others, but do strike at all sin, and do not content ourselves to lop the branches, but strike at the very root of sin: for Paul describeth this work to be a putting off the old man, that is, the bitter root of inbred corruption, in its full latitude and extent; "That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man."

4. Though we must begin to strike at the root of sin within, yet we are not to rest there, but must set against sin in all its branches; and whoever setteth upon sin at the root and in the heart, he cannot choose but set against the breaking forth of sin in his hand and outward conversation also: yea, the reality of his fighting against his inward corruptions, will make itself manifest in an outward change in his conversation from what it formerly was: for so much is imported, while he sheweth they were to be put off the old man, as to the former conversation, not as if sins of the outward man and conversation only were to be put off, but because those are also to be mortified, and the inward work of mortification doth kith [appear] by our putting off of those.

5. The work of putting off and mortifying this old man of inbred corruption is to be entered timely, in so far as the longer that corruption is spared, it groweth worse, and posteth the person in whom it is more swiftly to ruin and destruction: for Paul doth, indirectly at least, press this duty of putting off the old man, from this, that it "is corrupt," or groweth worse and worse "by its deceitful lusts."

6. This inbred root of natural corruption doth vent itself in multitudes and swarms of inordinate lusts and sinful desires, by venting whereof it doth always acquire the more strength, and secureth its interest more firmly, both in soul and body; for he sheweth that this old man hath lusts, and is corrupted, or made worse, and more deeply rooted by those lusts; "which is corrupted by deceitful lusts."

7. Sinful lusts are enticing and deceitful lusts, in so far as they promise what they never perform, 2 Pet. ii. 19, and do often cover themselves under the mask of some laudable virtue, Col. ii. 18, and thus do by subtlety carry the sinner captive to their slavery, Prov. vii. 21, 22; for he calleth them "deceitful lusts," or, as it is in the original, "lusts of deceit."

VER. 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Here is the second thing which the effectual learning of Christ doth require from and work in the person so taught, even a serious endeavour to have his mind and understanding more and more renewed, or made new, by getting a new quality of divine and supernatural light implanted in it; and he calleth the understanding, or rational part of the soul, "the spirit of their mind," that is, the most spiritual part of

the soul; or, by an Hebraism, their spiritual mind, so called, because the mind, or understanding, is less subject to be wrought upon by the temper and disposition of the body, than the will and affections.

DOCTRINES.

1. The principal part of the soul, the very seat of reason, the mind and understanding in all men, is by nature infected and polluted by this old man of inbred corruption: for otherwise there were no need that we should be "renewed in the spirit of our mind."

2. It is not sufficient in order to our effectual learning of Christ, and being taught by him, that we cease to do evil, and labour to mortify our inbred corruption, with the several branches thereof; but we must also learn to do well, and endeavour to have the whole man adorned with the several graces of God's Spirit, making conscience of all the positive duties of a holy life: for the apostle sheweth their being taught of Christ, consisted, not only in the putting off the old man, but "in being renewed in the spirit of their mind," and, ver. 24, "in putting on that new man."

3. See three doctrines implied in the notation of the word "renewed," which signifieth to restore a thing deformed and antiquated to its ancient form and beauty, upon Col. iii. ver. 10, Doct. 4, 5, 6.

4. Right information of the mind and judgment, and the knowledge of truth and duty flowing therefrom, are most necessary to be sought after by Christians, if so they would lead a holy life: an erring mind will of necessity, at least in so far, make a crooked heart and an irregular hand: for Paul sheweth that in particular it is necessary to be "renewed in the spirit of the mind."

VER. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Resteth the third thing, which the effectual learning of Christ doth require from and work in those who are so taught, even that it be their daily task to put on the new man, that is, to be more and more endued and adorned with new and spiritual qualities, whereby their mind may not only be renewed, as was mentioned ver. 23, but also their will, affections, and actions. Which renewing work he sheweth is carried on by God's creating power, after the pattern of his own image, which consisteth in perfect conformity to God's law, as well in the second table, set forth here by righteousness, as in the first, set forth by true holiness, or holiness of truth, to wit, that which is wrought by truth, John xvii. 17, and is not counterfeit, but sincere, true, and real: which epithet doth also agree to righteousness. Now, those gracious and spiritual qualities are called the new man, and said to be put on, as new garments. (See the reasons for both, upon Col. iii. ver. 9, 10, Doct. 3.)

Hence learn, 1. Where there is saving knowledge wrought in the mind, sanctified practice in all the duties of a holy life will follow: for unto the renewing of the mind, ver. 23, is here

subjoined the "putting on the new man in righteousness and holiness."

2. So dead and indisposed are we by nature to holiness and grace, that no less than creating power is required to work it in us: it is neither implanted by nature, *Psa. li. 5*, nor attainable by any industry or pains of ours, *Rom. ix. 16*, but is a work of God's omnipotency, though he make use of means for that end, *2 Tim. iv. 2*; for he saith, this "new man is created."

3. Only those who are renewed in knowledge and have their souls adorned with gracious and spiritual qualities of righteousness and holiness, are like to God; and such as are most so are most like unto him; for Paul, speaking of being renewed in the mind, and of putting on the new man, saith, that it is "after God," or, (as it is more plainly, *Col. iii. 10*,) after the image of God; "Which after God is created," saith he.

4. The image of God consisteth, not so much in the natural substance or faculties of the soul, or the abilities of it, (for those are in a wicked man) as in spiritual gifts and graces, even conformity with God in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness: for the apostle, speaking of the renovation of the mind by knowledge, and putting on the new man in righteousness and holiness, saith, "That this is after God," or, "after his image."

5. This new man of grace, created after God's image, as it consisteth not in things external, *Rom. xiv. 17*, but in the inward and substantial graces of God's Spirit; so it comprehendeth all spiritual habits and virtues, and the exercise of all those graces, in all the duties of universal obedience, prescribed in both the tables of the moral law: for he sheweth this new man consisteth in righteousness and holiness, which include a conformity to the law of God in both its tables; "Which is created in righteousness and true holiness."

6. No performance of any one or of all commanded duties whatsoever, is a sufficient proof of a renewed mind, or the new creature, but when it carrieth along with it that necessary ingredient of sincerity and truth, which maketh the performer of any duty take God for his party, *Gen. xvii. 1*, bring up his heart to every duty, *Jer. iii. 10*, and level at God's glory as his main scope in all duties, *1 Cor. x. 31*, and make conscience, not only of one but of every duty, *Luke i. 6*; for he giveth this epithet of truth and sincerity to that righteousness and holiness wherein this new man of grace, created after God's image, doth consist; "in righteousness and true holiness," or in righteousness and holiness of truth.

VER. 25. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

The apostle (being in the third part of the chapter to press upon them the exercise of some particular virtues which do belong to all Christians of whatsoever rank or station equally, as well as those formerly spoken of, all of which are enjoined in the second table of the com-

mands) exhorteth them, first, from what he spake of putting off the old man, and putting on the new, to lay aside and mortify the sin of lying, forbidden in the ninth command, whereby a man doth speak what he knoweth or conceiveth to be untruth, with an intention and purpose to deceive. He exhorteth them also to speak the truth every man with his neighbour, that is, to speak as they think, and to think of what they speak as it really is, so that our speech may be conformed both to the thing itself, and to our conceptions of the thing. Which exhortation in both its branches, is enforced from this, that they were not only members of one body, but one of another, every member of this mystical body being bound to contribute all its endeavours, as for the good of the whole body in the first place, so of every particular member in the next; and therefore it had been alike unnatural and monstrous for them, by lying and deceiving, to circumvent one another, as it were for the eye in the natural body to deceive the hand, or for any one member to contrive and carry on the ruin of another.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not sufficient for Christ's ministers to press upon the Lord's people the mortification of sin, or conscience making of the duties of holiness in the general; but seeing people are apt to think that a slight performance, or faint endeavours are sufficient obedience to these general exhortations, therefore ministers must condescend upon some particular vices, chiefly such as are most commonly practised in the place where they are, and some particular virtues, which are most ordinarily slighted, pressing upon the Lord's people to evidence their renovation by abstinence from the former, and practising of the latter: for Paul, having indirectly at least exhorted them to put off the old man, *ver. 22*, and put on the new, *ver. 24*, doth now fall upon some particular vices and virtues, dehorting from the one, and exhorting to the other; "Wherefore putting away lying."

2. There is no sin more unseemly in a Christian, and more inconsistent with grace, than the sin of lying, there being no sin that maketh a man more like the devil, *John viii. 44*, more abominable to God, *Prov. vi. 16, 17*, nor more shameful in the eyes of men, so that even they who are most guilty of it, cannot endure to be charged with it; no sin more hurtful to the sinner, as making him to be trusted by none; and no sin which tendeth more to the utter overthrow of all human society, fidelity and trust among men, being that which maketh any society comfortable: for the apostle dehorteth from lying, upon the ground of their putting on the new man, as is implied in the illative particle "wherefore:" "Wherefore putting away lying."

3. As all kind of lying is intrinsically sin, and to be avoided, whether the pernicious, officious, or sporting lie, (see upon *Col. iii. 8, 9*, *Doct. 10*;) so there is no person of whatsoever rank, whether rich or poor, to whom God giveth any dispensation to lie, or speak contrary to truth: for he saith indefinitely, "putting away lying," and "speak every man truth," without exception.

4. Though we are not bound to speak all the truth, and at all times, and to every person, but in some cases may and ought to conceal somewhat of it, Luke ix. 21, 1 Sam. xvi. 2; yet when we speak, we are to speak nothing but truth, and that without mental reservation of any part of the purpose, without which the rest which is spoken, would not be truth but a lie: for though it be sufficient for a man to think what is truth, and not to express it, when he is speaking or meditating with himself, yet he is to speak truth, if so he speak at all, when he speaketh with his neighbour; "speak every man truth with his neighbour," saith he.

5. This is a general rule to be observed for the right understanding of divine precepts, that where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is also commanded, and where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is also forbidden: for the apostle, expounding here the ninth command, doth not only exhort "to lay aside lying," but also "to speak every man truth with his neighbour."

6. Though it be sinful to lie and speak untruth unto any, even to an infidel, Ezek. xvii. 16, yet it is more sinful and most odious for believers and professors of the same faith, because of their nearer bonds and relations, to lie unto and deceive one another: for so much the apostle's reason here used, which is astricted only to such, doth teach; "For we are members one of another," saith he.

7. It is not sufficient that a man abstain from lying, and endeavour to speak truth with his neighbour, from a motive of self-advantage and interest, as knowing his doing otherwise would tend both to his loss and shame; but he ought to be acted herein from a principle of love towards those with whom he speaketh, chiefly if he conceive them to be believers, as to members of that same body for whose advantage and preservation especially he is bound to lay out himself in his place and station; so far must he be from seeking to undermine them or deceive them: for Paul will have them to put away lying, and to speak the truth, for this reason, that "they were all members one of another."

VER. 26. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

He exhorteth them, next, to restrain and moderate their anger, forbidden in the sixth command. And, 1. He, as it were, giveth them way to be angry sometimes and in some cases. 2. He dissuadeth them from sinful anger, or any unjust desire of revenge, which is, when anger is kindled rashly, Prov. xiv. 17, for no cause, Matt. v. 22, or a very light one, 1 Cor. xiii. 5; or when it exceedeth the just bounds, Gen. xlix. 7. And, 3. If their anger at any time should exceed bounds, and turn to wrath, or bitterness of spirit, he exhorteth them to suppress it speedily, even before the sun go down, not cherishing that ill, or forbearing themselves in it, for the space of one night.

DOCTRINES.

1. Seeing anger is a natural affection, planted

in our first parents at the first creation: yea, and also was found in Christ himself, who was without sin, Mark iii. 5; therefore it is not in itself a sin, nor always sinful; but, as it is in its own nature indifferent, and becometh good or evil, according to the grounds, causes, objects, and ends of it, so it is sometimes and in some cases a necessary duty for a Christian to be angry, to wit, when anger floweth from zeal to God's glory, John ii. 15, with 17, and love to our brother, Prov. xiii. 24; and when it is conceived upon just and weighty causes, such chiefly, as God's dishonour, whether by our own sins, 2 Cor. vii. 11, or the sins of others, Exod. xxxii. 19; when it is incensed, not so much against the person of our brother, as against his sin, and therefore against that sin in ourselves, as much as in others, Matt. vii. 5; when it doth not hinder other duties of love, which we owe to the person whom we are angry with, Exod. xxxii. 19, with 32; neither doth mar our access to God in prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 8; and when we go not without the compass of our calling, by giving way to private revenge in the accomplishment of our anger, Luke ix. 54, 55: in those cases, anger is praiseworthy and commendable; for the apostle giveth way to anger, yea, after a sort commandeth it, to wit, in those cases; "Be ye angry," saith he.

2. As there is an easy and ready passage from what is moderation in our natural affections of joy, fear, grief, desire, (and therefore lawful and in some cases necessary,) to what is excess, (and therefore sinful,) Psal. ii. 11, so this doth chiefly hold in the affection of anger: it being most difficult to keep a measure, and not to exceed, by transgressing some one or other of the forementioned limitations of just anger when it is once given way to: for therefore doth he add this necessary caution, "Be angry," but "sin not."

3. As it is possible even in the child of God for lawful anger to degenerate in sinful wrath, whereby the mind is embittered, and accordingly rageth against the person of him who hath done the wrong; so an implacable spirit, which cannot be worn out by length of time, is not so incident to any such: for the apostle supposeth they may have wrath, only they might not entertain it long, while he saith, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

4. The child of God, in his resisting sin, is not to sit down discouraged, nor give the back when sin prevaileth; but having received a new recruit of strength from Christ, by the exercise of faith in prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8, he is with renewed courage to set upon sin afresh, that so he may recover what was formerly lost; for Paul enjoineth, in case their anger should at any time exceed, to set against it without delay; "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

VER. 27. Neither give place to the devil.

He giveth a reason of the former exhortation, set down by way of precept, to wit, that by giving way to excessive anger, and by persevering in it for any space of time, they should cast open doors to Satan, the capital enemy of man's salvation, to enter their hearts, and to incite them

by his incessant suggestions to act some mischief.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Satan is dethroned and shut to the doors of the hearts of all such as are true believers; so, though he shall never reign again over them at his pleasure, Rom. vi. 14; yet he is daily watching, and searching out, if it were but the narrowest passage and least opportunity whereby he may again re-enter his old possession, and exercise his former tyranny: for, both those are implied, while he saith, "Neither give place to the devil."

2. Where any known sin, especially excessive anger, is not only given way to, but also continued in, there doth Satan get an open door to settle himself in the heart, and exercise his power, by inciting the person guilty to commit more of wickedness and mischief: for he sheweth, that by their persevering in wrath they would "give place to the devil."

3. As Satan doth not slip an offered opportunity of recovering his former interest in the heart; so where he gaineth any ground, though for never so short a space, he stirreth his time, and through God's permission maketh fearful havoc, and a doleful decay of the work of grace: for, while he holdeth this forth as an argument against their persevering in excessive anger, that thereby they should cast open doors for the devil to enter, it is implied that he would take place when it were given, and bestir his time in exciting them to act mischief, otherwise the argument should not be of such force; "Neither give place to the devil."

VER. 28. Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

He doth, thirdly, exhort those who, when they were unconverted pagans, did, contrary to the eighth command, steal their neighbour's goods, or who were yet, after their professing faith in Jesus Christ, guilty of that sin in some degrees and respects, that they would "steal no more:" where by the sin of "stealing," is meant all those fraudulent and deceitful ways whereby a man doth wrong his neighbour secretly and without his knowledge in his goods or outward estate, whether by taking, Job xx. 19, or withholding from him what is his, James v. 4, or by partaking with such as do so, Psal. l. 18. He exhorteth them also to the contrary duty, as a remedy of this evil, even that they would rather labour diligently and to weariness (as the word signifieth) in any good and honest calling, if it were but in some mechanic or handy-trade; the use of which remedy is enforced from a following advantage, to wit, that hereby, and through God's blessing upon their diligence, they should acquire not only a competency in things worldly unto themselves, and so be kept from a necessity of stealing, but also might be able to bestow somewhat for supplying the necessities of others.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Jesus Christ doth not reject the vilest, no not thieves, nor worse, for any thing they have been, providing they amend their life in time coming, so there are many who, after they have taken on a name of profession, do secretly live in the practice of base and shameful sins, which hardly can be called the spots of children: for, while he saith, "Let him that stole," or "doth steal," (as the word beareth) "steal no more," it is supposed that some of those Ephesians were guilty of this sin, before an offer of mercy was made to them in the gospel; yea, and that some were yet living in it.

2. It hath seemed good unto the wise Creator of all things (for eschewing of confusion, strife, contention, and other infinite evils, for trial of the charity of some, and patience of others) to establish property and dominion of goods and possessions, and not to leave all things common among men, so that every one should have an equal right unto all: for if there were no propriety of goods, there could not be such a sin as "stealing;" neither were it necessary to forbid it, as the Spirit of God doth here; "Let him that stole, steal no more."

3. As want of a particular calling, or idleness in it, occasioneth poverty and want, by reason whereof men are cast upon temptations to steal and use such other sinful shifts to keep them from straits; so it is the Lord's will, that every one betake himself to labour diligently in some lawful calling and employment, as a remedy not only against this evil of stealing, but several others also which flow from idleness and too much ease, 2 Thess. iii. 12, Psal. lxxiii. 5; for the apostle having forbidden them to steal, subjoineth this as a remedy, "rather let him labour, working with his hands."

4. Though it be not absolutely necessary, nor yet convenient or possible, that every man should betake himself to some mechanic calling or handy-trade, and therein to labour with his hands, seeing every one is not able to go about any such calling; and there are other lawful callings, which require no less labour with the mind, than those do of labour with the hands, 1 Tim. v. 17; yet there is no calling so base, providing it be honest, to which a man should not betake himself, (whatever he be for birth, and nobility of descent) and spend his strength therein even to weariness, rather than to steal, or use any sinful shift to save himself from straits: for, saith he, "Let him steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands."

5. Even those things that were imposed upon fallen mankind for a curse and punishment of sin, have their nature changed unto believers, and are turned unto a blessing and an effectual remedy against sin: for, Gen. iii. 19, it is imposed upon Adam as a part of the curse, in the sweat of his face to eat his bread, and here it is enjoined and commended by the apostle unto believers, as an effectual remedy against the evil of stealing; "But rather let him labour, working with his hands."

6. No necessity, or want whatsoever, can warrant a man to employ himself in any calling

which is not lawful and honest, or tendeth only to gratify men's lusts of pride, vanity, prodigality, and uncleanness: this calling ought to be such as he may therein serve God with a good conscience, Col. iii. 23; and promote the good, either of the church, family, or commonwealth, Gal. v. 13; for to prevent stealing, he doth astrict them in their choice only to good and lawful callings, while he saith, "Let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good."

7. The Lord's ordinary way is to bless a man's conscientious diligence in his lawful calling, with such a measure of success as he may have whereby to sustain himself and to be helpful unto others, except the Lord see it otherwise fitting, for the man's trial and the exercise of his faith, patience, and other graces, 2 Cor. viii. 2; for the end of labouring in a lawful calling, here proposed, is for the most part attained, else it had been no encouragement, even "that he may have to give him that needeth."

8. As it is the duty of all whom God hath blessed with any measure of worldly substance, to bestow some part of it for the help of others; so we ought in the exercise of our callings, as we would expect the Lord's blessing upon it, to intend not only the enriching of ourselves and ours, but also that we may have whereby to do good unto others: for he sheweth they were to aim at this end, while they wrought with their hands; "that they might have to give to him that needeth."

9. As not only the rich, but even the poor labourer, who hardly getteth his livelihood with the work of his hands, is bound to give his mite for the help of the indigent; so we ought to give alms of that which is our own lawfully purchased, and not of the gain of oppression or hire of a harlot. Deut. xxiii. 18; for, saith he, "Let him work that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

10. As the Lord seeth it fitting to keep always some among his people poor and indigent, even objects of charity, for the exercise of their faith and patience, and for the trial of the charity and compassion of others, Dent. xv. 11, so those only are to be relieved by our charity, who are needy, indigent, and cannot relieve themselves: but not such, as being able to work in a lawful calling, do rather choose a life of ease and idleness, and to live upon the charity of others: for he saith, "that he may have to give to him that needeth."

VER. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Here is a fourth exhortation, wherein he giveth direction for the right ordering of the tongue: and first, he forbiddeth them to utter corrupt or unsavoury and putrefied communication, or speech, whereby is meant all discourse not tending to the glory of God and edification of our neighbour, (as appeareth from the latter part of the verse, where edifying conference is opposed to this corrupt communication,) but mainly all obscene, scurril, ranting, and arrogant discourse is here intended, even such as argueth a rotten

and unrenewed heart, Matt. xii. 35, and proveth not only noisome and unsavoury to honest ears, but also contagious and infecting to ordinary hearers, 1 Cor. xv. 33, even as a stinking breath (unto which he seemeth here to allude) argueth rotten lungs, doth prove unsavoury, yea, and (if the party be taken with any contagious disease) dangerous also unto those who stand by, lest they be infected by it. Next, he enjoineth the contrary duty, that their discourse and communication should be good and useful for the edification of hearers, even such as may minister grace unto them; that is, which may be a mean blessed of God for begetting or carrying on the work of grace in them, and for that end may be so proposed, as it should prove most taking, gracious, and acceptable unto them. See upon Col. iii. 16, and iv. 6.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of renewed Christians, as to watch over the heart and hand, so in a special way to guard against the sins of the tongue, seeing they must make an account to God, even for words, Matt. xii. 36, and their sinful, vain, frothy, and rotten discourse doth argue such a heart, from the abundance whereof the mouth doth speak, Matt. xii. 34; yea, and maketh the heart more perverse and wicked, while the corruption which is in it doth strengthen itself by getting vent, 2 Tim. iii. 13, and proveth also contagious to the hearers, 1 Cor. xv. 33; for the apostle, having dissuaded them from the sins of the heart and hand, doth now dissuade them from the sins of the tongue; "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth."

2. As our corrupt hearts, which in the best are but renewed in part, are very ready to hatch impure, vain, and unprofitable corruptions, and to press the venting of those by the tongue, in vain and corrupt communication; so it is the renewed man's duty, and ought to be his care, to keep a watch at the door of his lips, Psa. cxli. 3; that, though he cannot get his heart kept from framing such conceptions, yet, at least, he may preserve his tongue from venting of them; seeing our corrupt conceptions do not only prove more dishonourable to God, when they are vented in expressions, but also in that case they prove offensive and hurtful unto others, 1 Cor. xv. 33; for the apostle, supposing that such impure stuff would sometimes breed in the heart, and seek a passage, he commandeth, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth."

3. As there is no sin which wanteth a remedy, so the most proper remedy of every sin is not only to set against the sin itself, but also to set about the practice of the contrary virtue: for Paul prescribeth this remedy, as against the sins forementioned, so against this; "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good," saith he.

4. It is not sufficient to refrain our tongue from speaking evil, keeping always silence; but seeing our tongue is our glory, Psa. lvii. 8, and given unto us not only for the use of tasting and carrying down to the throat our meat and drink, but also to express the conceptions of our heart, to the glory of God and edification of our neigh-

bour; therefore we must also exercise our tongue in speaking what is good: for so doth the apostle command, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good."

5. It is the duty not only of ministers, but of private Christians also, (keeping themselves within the bounds of their calling, Heb. v. 4.) to endeavour the edification of those with whom they converse, while they labour either to beget or carry on the work of grace in them; and this not only by their good example, but by their edifying discourse and communication: for he speaketh to all indifferently, while he saith, "Let no communication come out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying."

6. We are not left to run at random in our ordinary discourses, as if we might speak what we please, providing we speak not evil, but are tied only to speak to edifying purpose, and this at all times, and with all persons, Col. iv. 6, whether we be speaking of things religious, or which appertain to our particular calling or recreations: for as it is lawful and necessary for Christians sometimes to speak of those things, so there is such a way to speak of them as the hearers may be bettered by our speech; "but that which is good to the use of edifying."

7. As godly discourse and conference ought to be heard and entertained by those who are present, so, although the word preached be the ordinary mean of converting sinners, Rom. x. 14, 15, yet the Lord is sometimes pleased to bless the familiar and secret discourses of private Christians, being spoken with grace, and seasoned with the salt of divine wisdom, by making them a mean of conveying grace unto others, even to some whom no public preaching of the word could ever move or work upon, 1 Pet. iii. 1; for the end of speaking good to the use of edifying here proposed is attainable, else it had been no strong motive to the duty, "that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

VER. 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

He doth here enforce the former dissuasive, by a strong reason set down in form of precept, the force whereof is first propounded, that by their obscene, unprofitable, unedifying discourse they would grieve the Holy Spirit of God, who is called "holy," because he is holy in himself, Isa. vi. 3, and the cause of all holiness in us, Rom. xv. 16: and we are said to grieve him, not as if he, who is God, could be grieved properly; for the passions of grief, anger, sorrow, &c., (as implying some defect or imperfection,) are not in God, Num. xxiii. 19; but improperly, and in so far as we do that which in itself is apt to grieve him, if he were capable of grief, Rom. xiv. 15, and which provoketh the Spirit of God to do that which grieved persons do, even to withdraw from the soul, to show his dislike, and to return grief for grief. This reason is, next, enforced from one work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, which is here called "sealing," by a metaphor taken from that use of seals

and signets among men, whereby public writs are confirmed and made authentic, or the wares of merchants are marked and set apart for their own use. In like manner, the Spirit of God, by renewing and sanctifying believers, imprinteth the drafts and lineaments of his own image upon them, whereby they are not only set apart and sealed as his own peculiar goods, but themselves also may be assured that they are his, and shall be safely kept under that seal until the day of judgment, called here the "day of redemption;" (see upon chap. i. ver. 13,) and therefore by grieving the Spirit they did hazard the removal of this seal, at least darken it much, and consequently mar their own comfort exceedingly.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity, is graciously pleased to become in a singular manner familiar with the truly regenerate, taking up a place of abode in their spirits, and furnishing them with sweet and necessary counsel and advice from time to time, 1 John ii. 27; for, as we show, his being grieved doth speak his withdrawing from them, and a ceasing from being so friendly and familiar with them, as a stranger will do from an inn wherein he hath received some affront, which implieth that he was once present and familiar with them: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

2. How friendly and familiar soever the Holy Spirit of God be with the believing soul, yet so holy and pure is his nature, that he can behold no iniquity, Hab. i. 13; but when those that are dearest to him give any way to known sin, he must show himself displeased with it, and with them for it: for so much is supposed while the apostle, dissuading them from sin, sheweth this Holy Spirit of God will be grieved by it; "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

3. However many, by their obscene and putrid discourse, intend no further than to make themselves or others jovial and glad, Hos. vii. 3, yet hereby, and by such other sins of the like stamp, as being against the motions, light, and direction of the Spirit, this Holy Spirit of God is much displeased, and so much as persons grieved use to be, and therefore will withdraw his gracious and comforting presence, with all those other tokens of his respect and favour, from the person by whom he hath been grieved, Isa. lvii. 17, leaving him to be guided for a time by his own spirit, and the spirit of Satan, Psa. lxxxi. 12, and giving him over to a kind of desperate grief and hellish horror, Psa. xxxii. 3, 4, or senseless stupidity, Isa. lxiii. 17, as a just reward for grieving the Holy Spirit of God: for Paul sheweth that by their putrid communication they would grieve the Spirit of God, and make him do what grieved persons use to do, while he saith, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

4. As those spiritual plagues inflicted upon our spirits for grieving of the Spirit of God, and following upon his withdrawing from us, are most terrible, so the child of God not only may, but ought, to scare at and abstain from sin, even that he may be preserved from those spiritual plagues and judgments, though neither love to duty, nor fear of any other correction do constrain him:

for the apostle laboureth to deter them from the sin of loose speaking by this consideration, as being of greatest force, even lest thereby they should grieve the Spirit; "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," saith he.

5. Though the redemption of God's children be perfected in regard of the price paid by Christ, John xix. 30, yet in regard of the application of it unto us, it is but begun in this world, and perfected in the next; for he speaketh of our complete redemption as yet to come; "Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

6. Those whom God will completely redeem from all sin and misery, both in soul and body, and from whose eyes he will wipe away all tears at the last day, are only such upon whom the Spirit of God doth imprint the drafts of his own image, in righteousness and holiness, as the impression of the draughts and lineaments of a seal, or by sealing put upon the thing sealed: for he saith, "by whom," meaning the Holy Spirit, "we are sealed unto the day of redemption."

7. Upon whomsoever the Spirit of God doth imprint this seal and stamp of true holiness, and of joy, peace, and comfort flowing therefrom, all such shall be securely kept and preserved, as God's own peculiar treasure, by the power of God unto salvation, to be fully manifested and completely bestowed at the last day; for they "are sealed unto the day of redemption;" a metaphor, as we show, from merchants, who, leaving their wares behind them, do put their mark and seal upon them, until such a day wherein they will come and own them.

8. By virtue of this sealing and stamp of sanctification, peace, and joy, imprinted by the Spirit of God upon the hearts of believers, even they themselves may attain to know assuredly that they are in the state of grace, and shall be preserved in it until the great day; for as this sealing of them, by imprinting the drafts of God's image upon them, is a discriminating mark betwixt them and others, so it serveth not so much to make it known unto God that they are his, who knoweth who are his from all eternity, and antecedently to their effectual calling, 2 Tim. ii. 19, or to make it known unto others, who cannot infallibly discern the grace of God in any but themselves, 1 Kings viii. 39, as unto themselves; otherwise the apostle would not have used a forcible argument not to grieve the Spirit, from his sealing of them, if it were a thing which could not be certainly known, but guessed at by them: "Grieve not the Spirit, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

9. So far is the work of grace in believers, or their assurance of being in a state of grace, flowing herefrom, and wrought in them by the Spirit of God, from breeding security and looseness of life, that, by the contrary, there can be no such prevailing argument to make them abhor sin, entertain and follow the motions of the Spirit of God, and consequently to lead a holy life. Not only ingenuity and gratitude for the favour received will bind them to it, but also holy fear and circumspection, lest otherwise they mar and darken the seal so as they cannot discern the drafts of it, and consequently lose, though not the seal itself, 1 John iii. 9, yet the comfort and

assurance which they had by it, Psa. xxx. 7; for the apostle useth this as an argument to keep them from grieving the Spirit by sin, even because they "were thereby sealed unto the day of redemption."

VER. 31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice:

Here is a fifth precept, containing an amplification and illustration of the second, given ver. 25, concerning the restraining of anger: and he doth illustrate it by forbidding the several branches, degrees, and effects of that evil, as, first, "all bitterness," whereby must be understood here the lowest degree of sinful anger, even all secret, smothered displeasure and alienation of affection, which hath more of discontent and grudge than of revenge in it, Psa. xxxvii. 1. Secondly, "wrath," or fierceness, which is an impetuous rage, and passionate commotion of the heart and affections, upon the sense of an apprehended or real injury, preventing and obstructing the use of reason, which being soon up, is as soon allayed, 1 Sam. xxv. 21, 22, with 32. Thirdly, anger, which, as it is distinguished from the rest, is an eager desire of revenge, and a fixed resolution, after deliberation, to have that desire satisfied, Acts xxiii. 12. Fourthly, clamour, whereby is meant boisterous words, loud menaces, and other inordinate speeches, which are the black smoke, whereby the fire of anger and wrath kindled within, doth first manifest itself, Acts xv. 39. Fifthly, "evil speaking, or blasphemy," as the word signifieth, a further fruit of wrath and anger, to wit, disgraceful and contumelious speeches, by which the party incensed doth endeavour to stain the reputation of him, who either really, or to his apprehension only, hath done him wrong, 1 Sam. xx. 30. And, sixthly, malice, which is rooted anger, and continuing wrath, making the person in whom it is, daily intent upon all occasions of revenge, and wholly implacable, until he get his vindictive humour satisfied, Rom. i. 31.

DOCTRINES.

1. "Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice," do grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and darken much the work of grace in the heart, whereby he sealeth believers; there being no sins more opposite to the fruits of the Spirit (mentioned Gal. v. 22,) than those are; so that where such sins are given way to, grace must be upon the decaying hand: for the apostle, unto that command, "grieve not the Spirit," immediately subjoineth this, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, be put away," implying, that otherwise they would grieve the Spirit.

2. So subtle is sin, and so impotent and unskilful are we to resist it, where it once getteth entry, that one degree of sin doth still make way for a further, and so goeth on from evil to worse: and therefore the wisest course is to oppose it betimes, lest by forbearance it gather strength: for the apostle doth here set down several degrees of sinful anger, the former whereof doth

still make way for the latter, and the latter is always worse, and a step nearer to the height than the former; "Let all bitterness, wrath and anger," &c.

3. It is not enough for Christians to refrain from the venting of their passions in their inordinate expressions and actions, but they must also, and in order to their refraining from those, set about the rectifying of their inward affections and most secret distempers of their spirit: otherwise, if the flame of anger and wrath doth burn within, it will most readily send up a black smoke of clamour and evil speaking, to the offence of others: for Paul forbiddeth not only "clamour and evil speaking," but also "all bitterness, wrath and anger."

4. Sins of the tongue and outward man are to be put away and mortified, as well as sins of the heart; they being in some respect more dangerous, Matt. xviii. 7, because more scandalous, and always implying a defiled heart, from which they flow, Matt. xv. 19, and which they render worse than formerly it was; "Let all clamour, and evil speaking be put away," saith he.

5. It is not sufficient to suppress, keep at under and weaken our corruptions; we ought to aim at and rest satisfied with nothing less than the total subduing, thorough removal and plucking of them up by the very roots: for he saith, "Let all bitterness, &c. be put away:" the word signifieth, "Let it be lifted up," and so destroyed.

VER. 32. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Here is the sixth precept enjoining the exercise of some virtues, which are opposite unto, and remedies against, those vices presently mentioned. The first whereof is, "mutual kindness," a virtue whereby from a sweet and loving disposition of heart towards all, Rom. xii. 10, we labour to be affable, easy to be entreated, for the good of others, James iii. 17; and of a sweet and amiable carriage towards those with whom we converse, Rom. xii. 18, and it is opposite both to pride of spirit, evidenced in a lofty carriage, Psa. x. 2—5, and to morosity or uncivil austerity, 2 Sam. xxv. 17. The second is "tender-heartedness," commiseration, or mercy, whereby we are most inwardly and in the very bowels (as the word signifieth) touched and affected with compassion towards the miseries and infirmities of others, so far would he have them from thirsting after revenge. And, thirdly, he recommendeth unto them to give evidence of their kindness and tender-heartedness, in a hearty, free, and pleasant pardoning of mutual wrongs, as the word signifieth. And, lastly, he enforceth this duty of mutual forgiveness from God's example, in forgiving us all our offences for Christ's sake. Concerning which duty of forgiving and pardoning one another here enjoined, know, first, that as to the wrong to be forgiven, in so far as it is always an offence against God, and sometimes against the public laws of the land, we have not power to forgive it, Isa. xliii. 25, nor to meddle with it further than by prayer to God, James v. 14, 15,

and in some cases, by intercession with the magistrate; but in so far only as it is a wrong done to us, we are to forgive it. Know, secondly, that this forgiveness implieth a removal of all inward grudge and endeavour after private revenge, Lev. xix. 18, together with a readiness to do all duties of love and kindness to him who hath done the wrong, as God doth minister occasion and ability, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5. Which yet, thirdly, doth not bind us up from having recourse to the magistrate for attaining restoration to our right, and reparation of our wrongs, providing we go not to law for trifles, 1 Cor. vi. 7, nor yet before all amicable means be privately essayed, for taking away the occasion of strife, 1 Cor. vi. 5. See further upon Col. iii. ver. 13, Doct. 3.

Hence, learn, 1. The exercise of kindness in a sweet and amicable carriage, is a singular remedy against sinful anger and all its branches, in so far as thereby we not only give no occasion of anger unto others, but also do give place unto wrath, Rom. xii. 19, whereby it slayeth itself, and we do overcome evil with good: for as a remedy against all the branches of sinful anger, formerly mentioned, he enjoineth, "And be ye kind one to another."

2. The exercise of mercy and tender-heartedness, is another sovereign remedy against sinful anger and all its branches, in so far as thereby we are enabled to look upon the fooleries, infirmities, yea, and other greater injuries done by our neighbour with pity and compassion, which otherwise would provoke our anger and passion: for he enjoineth this as another remedy against all the branches of sinful anger, "Be ye tender-hearted."

3. Then, and not while [until] then, may a man conclude that wrath and anger are sufficiently mortified, when he is not only in a readiness to discharge all duties of kindness and love to the party who hath injured him, but doth also look upon him for so doing, as one who is an object of compassion and pity, rather than of passion and anger: for, instead of bitterness, wrath, anger, and malice, against those who had injured them, he enjoineth, "And be ye kind one to another, and tender-hearted."

4. The exercise of kindness and tender-heartedness, ought and will go together, where there is a suitable object for both to work upon, so that kindness will not be broken off, because of the miseries and infirmities of those to whom we owe kindness, but rather heightened and helped by an addition of tender-heartedness and bowels of compassion: for he commandeth not only "be ye kind one to another," which respecteth our neighbour under either state, whether of prosperity or adversity, but also "be tender-hearted," which respecteth him under misery.

5. Those graces of kindness and mercy are to be exercised especially in the case of wrongs and injuries; yea, the reality of those graces are best tried, not by our exercising them to such as do us no hurt, but in bearing with and pardoning of those who have given just cause of provocation by real injuries: for the apostle will have kindness and tender-heartedness exercised "in forgiving one another," which supposeth a wrong done.

6. Even those who have gotten a heart from God to forgive wrongs done to themselves by others, are not so free of infirmities, but they will be sometimes doing real injuries unto others, and therefore stand in need of forgiveness themselves: for so much is implied, while he calleth for mutual performance of this duty, even "forgiving one another."

7. Only those whom God hath forgiven for Christ's sake, can freely, pleasantly, and from the fountain of true love in the heart, forgive those wrongs which are done to them by others; and the more a man hath attained to know that God hath pardoned himself, he will be the more inclinable to show forgiveness unto others: for he maketh their forgiving of others, a consequence of God's forgiving them. And therefore, when the Scripture commandeth us to forgive, that we may be forgiven, Mark xi. 25, it doth not mean that our forgiving others doth go before God's pardoning of us, but is an immediate effect of it, or at the most an antecedent to our sensible perceiving of it; "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

8. That God's practice in forgiving us, is an effectual argument for exciting us to forgive and pardon one another, see upon Col. iii. 13, Doct. 7.

9. The example of God in forgiving us, is not only an argument exciting us to forgive one another, but also a pattern, which we are to resemble in the manner of our forgiveness; not that our forgiveness can match his in equality or perfection, but in similitude and likeness; which consisteth chiefly in this, that we forgive sincerely, not hypocritically, freely and unwillingly, fully and not by halves, irrevocably and not for a time only, as he doth, Matt. xviii. 35; Mic. vii. 18; Col. ii. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34; for he saith, "Forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you."

10. Though God hath freely forgiven us, yet he hath seen to the satisfaction of his provoked justice for the wrong done, antecedently to his forgiving of us; which satisfaction is not exacted of us, but of Christ who was made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. And therefore, though we are to imitate God in remitting the private injury done to ourselves, and that in the manner mentioned in the preceding doctrine; yet we have not power to dispense with the injury done to the justice of God, nor to the public laws of the land; yea, in some cases, the law of God alloweth that we pursue the party before the judge, and notwithstanding of our forgiving him, to seek that the law may strike against him, Deut. xxi. 18, &c.; "Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

CHAPTER V.

THE apostle, in the first part of this chapter (having first confirmed the precept given in the last words of chapter iv., by pressing upon them to imitate God in forgiving one another, from the fountain of love, ver. 1, 2,) doth yet exhort them unto such duties as belong unto all Chris-

tians in general. And, First, he forbiddeth six vices, all of them almost contrary unto chastity: because, first, they are uncomely for saints, ver. 3; secondly, inconvenient, ver. 4; thirdly, they exclude from God's kingdom, ver. 5. And, fourthly, they bring down God's wrath, ver. 6. Secondly, he dehortheth from partaking with wicked men in their sins, ver. 7, because of that blessed change wrought in them from darkness to light, ver. 8. The force of which consequence is proved from the fruits of light, ver. 9, and (having pointed at the rule of right walking, ver. 10, and explained the precept set down ver. 7, by discharging all accession to the sins of the wicked, and enjoining them to reprove them, ver. 11,) he enforceeth yet further the duty so explained, first, from the abominable filthiness of those sins, ver. 12; secondly, from the good following upon reproof, even the conviction of the sinner, ver. 13; and, thirdly, from God's own example, who reproveth the world of sin, and thereby conveyeth light unto them, ver. 14. Thirdly, he exhorteth to circumspect walking, ver. 15, which consisteth mainly in redeeming the time, ver. 16, and, in order hereto, that they would acquaint themselves with God's revealed will, ver. 17. Fourthly, he exhorteth them to eschew drunkenness. And, fifthly, to be filled with the Spirit, ver. 18, and to vent that fulness of the Spirit, first, in melodious singing of praises unto God, ver. 19; secondly, in giving of thanks for all things, ver. 20.

In the second part of the chapter, the apostle (having premitt'd a general exhortation unto all, to submit themselves one to another, ver. 21,) doth press those duties which belong to Christians, as they are members of families. And, first, the duties of wives under the name of submission, set forth by the manner of it, as unto the Lord, ver. 22. Secondly, by the ground or reason of it, the husband's headship, illustrated from Christ's, ver. 23. Thirdly, by the pattern of it, the church's subjection to Christ. And, fourthly, by the extent of it, to all things, ver. 24. Next, he presseth the duty of husbands under the name of love, first, from Christ's love to his church, giving himself for her, ver. 25, and that for two ends, to wit, the sanctification, ver. 26, and glorification thereof, ver. 27; secondly, from the near union betwixt husband and wife, they being one flesh, and therefore he ought to love her, ver. 28. Because, 1, all men care for their own flesh. 2. Christ careth for his church, ver. 29, because of the strict union betwixt him and the church, ver. 30. And, 3, the ancient law of marriage doth expressly enjoin so much, ver. 31. And because he hath spoken of the union betwixt Christ and the church, he declareth it to be a great and unsearchable mystery, ver. 32, and so concludeth the purpose, by summing the duties of husbands and wives in two words, love and reverence.

VER. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

The apostle (being to insist further in exhorting to such particular virtues as do belong to all Christians in general, of whatsoever rank or sta-

tion,) doth first illustrate the sixth and last precept, given chap. iv., whereby he enjoined the exercise of mutual kindness and mercy in forgiving one another, because of God's example in forgiving them for Christ's sake. Which precept he doth illustrate, first, by reinforcing the duty, together with the motive to it, from God's example, while, 1, he commandeth them to be followers of God, to wit, in the exercise of kindness, mercy, and forgiveness: for, according to the present scope, the imitation of God here enjoined, seemeth to be stricted unto those particulars, as Matt. v. 44, 45, and Luke vi. 35, &c., though otherwise it may be extended, and elsewhere is extended, unto all those divine virtues, whereof some representation and shadow at least ought to be in us, 1 Pet. i. 16. And, secondly, he giveth a reason why they should imitate God thus, even because they were his children by adoption, and not only children, but dear children, and dearly beloved by God their Father. All of them did, at least, profess themselves to be such, Mal. i. 6, and the better part of them really were such, John i. 12, and therefore they were to imitate him in the exercise of those virtues, as they would evidence themselves to be of his children.

DOCTRINES.

1. One and the selfsame action of God, and chiefly his works of mercy towards believers, are more than one way advantageous unto them; in so far as thereby not only they are freed from sin and misery, but also have an argument and motive furnished both unto them on whom he sheweth mercy, whereby they may be incited to their duty of showing mercy unto others, and to others also to show mercy unto them: for he sheweth that God, in forgiving them, had cast a copy to be followed by them in their forgiving one another, while he saith, "Be ye therefore followers of God."

2. Though we neither ought nor can imitate God in his works of creation and providence, Isa. xiv. 13, 14, neither may we presume to imitate him in any thing further than his revealed will prescribeth as our duty, Isa. viii. 20; yet whatever attributes or actions of his have in them any proportion or resemblance with any virtue or duty prescribed unto us, we ought to look upon such as our copy and pattern to be followed by us: for he saith, "Be ye followers of God," with relation to his forgiving them for Christ's sake.

3. It is not sufficient to do the same things to others, which God hath done to us, except we endeavour to imitate and follow him in the way and manner wherein he doth them; so as that we do them not from any base or inferior motive or for any wrong end, but from a desire to be conformed unto him, and unto what is required of us in the word by him: for this following and imitating of God here enjoined, implieth a purpose and endeavour to conform ourselves to him; "Be ye therefore followers of God."

4. God's example in such things as are imitable by us, is the only unerring pattern to be absolutely followed, and without any reserve or limitation: and the practice of any other, is to

be followed but so far as their example is coincident with God's word and practice. See 1 Cor. xi. 1, where Paul commandeth them to follow him with an express limitation, to wit, as he was a follower of Christ, but here his command is absolute and unlimited; "Be ye followers of God."

5. The Lord doth enter into most intimate friendship with and taketh on most near relations unto those whose sins he pardoneth, so that he doth not only free them from deserved wrath, but placeth them among the children, and maketh them adopted sons and daughters unto himself: for here he calleth them God's dear children, of whom he said, chapter iv. 32, "that God had forgiven them for Christ's sake."

6. All those who are dear children to God by adoption, should look upon their highest privileges, as strongest engagements to duty, and particularly set themselves to imitate him in the exercise of mercy, kindness, forgiveness, and of such other duties as he hath made lovely and amiable by his own example: for Paul maketh their privileges an engagement to duty, and to imitate God in particular; "Be ye followers of God as dear children."

7. It is not sufficient that we set ourselves to imitate God, except we do it as dear children, that is, first, humbly, Matt. xviii. 2, 3, and next, with a kind of natural affection and propension, (for, so do children affect to imitate, and by imitation to please their parents,) and not as servants and slaves by compulsion: hence he saith, "as dear children," pointing not only at the reason why, but the manner how, they should follow him.

VER. 2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.

He doth, next, illustrate yet further that precept given chap. 4, ver. 32, and jointly sheweth wherein they were to imitate God, to wit, not only in forgiving, but also in loving one another, and so as they should "walk in love;" whereby is meant, that all their actions towards their neighbour ought not only to be good in themselves, but also flow from a principle of love to his good and edification: which duty, or constant task of walking in love, is enforced by a new argument taken from Christ's example, "who loved us," and did evidence his love by "giving himself" freely, and of his own accord, (John x. 18,) even unto death "for us," or for our sins, Gal. i. 4; which action of Christ is illustrated, first, from the end for which he did give himself, even to be a propitiatory sacrifice unto God, for expiating all the sins of the elect, as was signified and typified by all those expiatory Levitical sacrifices under the Old Testament; whether those which were generally called by the name of "offering," under which were comprehended all sacrifices, both of living beasts, and of things destitute of life, as flour, oil, frankincense, and such like; or those which were more strictly called by the name of "sacrifice," and were of

living beasts, and therefore conjoined with shedding of blood, as the word in the original implieth, which cometh from a root signifying to kill and slay : hence it is, that our crucified Lord doth here get the name both of an "offering" and "sacrifice." This action of Christ is illustrated, next, from its fruit and efficacy, to wit, the rendering of God well-pleased with Christ his offering up himself, and with the persons and performances of true believers for his sake ; as sweet-smelling odours, by reason of their likeness unto and agreement with our spirits, are well-pleasing and satisfying unto such as find them.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whatever duties of mercy and kindness we do discharge unto our neighbour, we do not sufficiently imitate God therein, neither perform service acceptable to him, if they flow not from a principle of love to our neighbour's good and edification, and be not directed thereunto, as the great end of our work next to the glory of God : and therefore a man may do many external duties of love, and yet not be accepted of God, when his great aim is to be seen of men, Matt. vi. 2, to merit heaven by his good works, Rom. ix. 31, 32, without any inward compassion or affection to his neighbour, or a sincere aim towards his good : for the apostle sheweth we do only then rightly imitate God in the duties of kindness and love, when all we do floweth from the inward affection of love, and is from love to our neighbour, directed to his good, while he saith, "walk in love."

2. Our walking in love to our neighbour, as it is formerly explained, and when it floweth from the fountain of love to God, is an evidence of adoption, and of one who is a dear child to God : for, having spoken of their near relation to God, as being his dear children, he presently enjoineth them to make so much evident by their "walking in love."

3. That God the Father doth pardon the sins of the elect, having given his Son unto death to purchase pardon for them, doth speak his love unto those whom he doth pardon ; and that Jesus Christ did willingly give himself to death for them, doth no less speak his unspeakable love unto them also, so that they are equally loved both by the Father and the Son : for he saith, "as Christ also hath loved us : " the particle "also" relateth to the love of the Father in pardoning for Christ's sake, whereof he presently spoke.

4. So necessary is love among Christians, together with those many duties which flow from it ; so many are the snares and difficulties, which Satan, our own corrupt natures, and our mutual infirmities, do create in our way to keep us from it ; that God seeth it necessary to propose the love both of the Father and the Son, as two most powerful adamant to draw our backward hearts up towards it : for, saith he, "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

5. As Christ's love to lost sinners, being firmly believed, is a strong argument constraining those whom he hath so loved, to walk in love towards others ; that being one of the great things required by him from those whom he loveth, John xv. 12 ; so, this love of Christ to us, ought to be

a pattern and copy, to which we are to be conformed in our love towards others : and therefore our love ought to be free ; for so was his, John xv. 16. It ought to be fruitful ; for so was his, Gal. i. 4 ; it ought to be constant ; for so was his, John xiii. 1 ; it ought to be discreet, not encouraging or humouring the person beloved in sin ; for so was his, Matt. xvi. 23. "And walk in love, as Christ hath loved us," saith he.

6. Then do we consider the love of Christ aright, and so as to be effectually incited to our duty from the consideration of it, when we look upon it in those effects which flowed from it, and especially in his death and sufferings, and do labour to appropriate by faith the good and benefit of those unto ourselves : for Paul, holding forth the love of Christ, as an argument inciting to love one another, doth so look upon it, while he saith, "and hath given himself for us."

7. The guilt of sin is so great, as being a breach of God's most holy law, and consequently a wrong done against an infinite God, Psa. li. 4 ; so exact is divine justice in requiring equivalent satisfaction for the wrong done, Exod. xxxiv. 7 ; that, as there is no reconciling of God with man without satisfaction, so no satisfaction, which man himself, or any mere creature, could give, was sufficient to do the turn : for otherwise there had been no necessity that Christ should have "given himself for us."

8. What no mere creature could do, Christ himself, having taken on the nature of man, hath done, even given full satisfaction to provoked justice, by giving himself to suffer both in soul (Isa. liii. 10,) and body (Isa. i. 6,) in the elect's stead ; so that he is taken, and they go free, John xviii. 18, for "he gave himself for us."

9. The pain and torment, both in soul and body, which Christ did give himself to endure and suffer, was inexpressible, and such as was fore-signified by what was done with the ancient offerings and sacrifices, according to God's command : some whereof were killed, flayed, and burnt ; some roasted, some fried on coals, and some seethed in pots : all which are but shadows of what Christ our Lord endured ; for "he gave himself an offering and sacrifice."

10. As those Levitical offerings and sacrifices under the law were not sufficient to satisfy divine justice for the sins of the elect ; so Jesus Christ, being offered up to God in death, is that only true and real sacrifice wherein provoked justice doth rest satisfied, and whereof all those other sacrifices were but types and shadows : for if they had satisfied justice, there had been no necessity of this other sacrifice which came in their stead, and so was represented by them : "he gave himself an offering and sacrifice."

11. Jesus Christ himself, in this offering, was both the priest, who, as he was God, did offer up himself, Heb. ix. 14, and the sacrifice which was offered, to wit, as he was man, Heb. x. 10 ; yea, and we may add, he was the altar also whereupon this sacrifice was offered up ; the virtue of his Godhead being that which not only underpinned his human nature in suffering, Isa. i. 7, 8, but also did add an infinite value to his sufferings, as being the sufferings of him who was God, Acts xx. 28, even as the altar doth sanctify

the gift, Matt. xxiii. 19; for "he gave himself an offering and sacrifice."

12. The ransom given by Christ for sinners, was paid unto God whom they had wronged, and not unto Satan, whose slaves we are by nature: although by virtue of that ransom we are freed from Satan's slavery and sin's dominion, Heb. ii. 14; for God the just Judge being satisfied, Satan the jailer and unjust tyrant did lose his right to keep us longer in bonds; "He gave himself an offering and sacrifice" (not to Satan, but) "to God," saith he.

13. As sin doth make us loathsome and unsavoury to God, and stirreth up his wrath against us, so the sweet savour of this one sacrifice, offered up by Christ, being laid hold upon by faith, appeaseth his wrath, and maketh us savoury and well-pleasing in his sight: for so much is implied while he saith, "He gave himself a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour:" a metaphor taken from men, who, when their senses are offended with some stinking savour, cannot be at quiet until some sweet perfume be burnt, which prevaleth above the other: in like manner the noisome smell of our sin did so move the Lord to wrath, that he would not be at rest, until the sweet smell of his Son's obedience did come to his nostrils, Job xxxiii. 24.

14. It is the only sacrifice of Christ, which by its own virtue doth appease the wrath of God, and make both the persons of the elect, and their spiritual performances acceptable to God: for "it is a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." And though this much be also spoken of other sacrifices, Gen. viii. 21, Exod. xxix. 41, yet it is to be understood of them, not as they were considered in themselves, Heb. x. 1, but as they related to this sacrifice of Christ, whereof they were types, and upon which the godly even then did rely by faith, Heb. xi. 4.

15. Whence it followeth, and from the text also, that not only an end is put to all those Levitical sacrifices, (seeing Christ this true and real sacrifice, whereof they were types, is offered up already in death,) but also that there is no sacrifice, properly so called, to be offered up in the Christian church, neither of any other thing besides Christ, neither is that sacrifice of Christ himself again to be repeated, and consequently that there is no priest, properly so called, but Christ alone: for the apostle sheweth this one sacrifice did abundantly pacify provoked justice, and therefore there is no need of any other: besides that the virtue of it is perpetual, Heb. x. 14—18, and so it needeth not to be reiterated; "a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

VER. 3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints;

The apostle cometh now to give some new precepts. And, first, in this and the following verse, he forbiddeth six vices, all of them, for the most part, contrary to chastity prescribed in the seventh command. Three of which vices are in the outward actions, and forbidden in this verse. 1. "Fornication," or the sin of filthiness, between

parties, both free from the yoke of marriage, 1 Cor. vii. 2, a sin looked upon as a thing indifferent, and no sin among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. vi. 12. 2. "Uncleanness," under which are usually comprehended all other sorts of filthy lusts between any parties whatsoever. 3. "Covetousness," that is, an immoderate desire (Heb. xiii. 5) to acquire, (Mic. ii. 2,) or to preserve worldly goods, Prov. xi. 24, 26. All which he doth so discharge, as that they should not name them, to wit, with delight, and without detestation; otherwise it is lawful to name them while we reprove them, as the apostle here doth: and he urgeth this prohibition from the state wherein they were, as being saints, separated from the world, and dedicated to God; and therefore it were most unseemly for them to defile themselves with such filthy lusts.

DOCTRINES.

1. True Christian love unto our neighbour, whereby we endeavour his preservation and good in his honour, person, chastity, outward estate and good name, Rom. xiii. 9, doth hugely differ from fleshly love flowing from lust, and from the love of the world, whereby we seek to satisfy our own sinful lusts, with our neighbour's hurt: for the former was enjoined, ver. 2, but the latter is here forbidden; "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness," &c.

2. The general prevalence of any sin ought neither to make people give more way to it, nor ministers speak less against it; but rather, because, the more common any sin is, God getteth the more dishonour by it; therefore the zeal of public ministers and private Christians ought to be so much the more intended against it: for, because fornication was so common among the Gentiles, that it was nearly looked upon as no sin, therefore doth Paul, almost in all his epistles to the churches of the Gentiles, fall upon it, as he doth also here; "But fornication, and all uncleanness," &c.

3. So violent is the lust of filthiness, that, if it be not all the more carefully guarded against, there is no state of life wherein it will not break forth, even although the ordinary mean of marriage appointed by God to prevent it, 1 Cor. vii. 2, be used: for he will have them to guard not only against fornication, which is the sin of filthiness between parties unmarried, but also against "all uncleanness," that is, all other sorts of filthy lusts, whereof filthiness between married parties is one.

4. There is a great affinity and sibness [relationship] between the lusts of filthiness and covetousness; in so far as the former, given way to, doth necessitate the lascivious wretch to thirst after, and by indirect means to purchase, worldly goods, that so he may have wherewith to uphold, (as his other lusts, James iv. 3, so) in a special manner this lust of uncleanness: for therefore doth he forbid those two lusts jointly; "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness."

5. It is not sufficient for saints to abstain from the outward practice of gross evils, except their outward abstinence do flow from inward detestation of them; otherwise, outward abstinence may well make a good civilian, but not a sincere

Christian: for Paul will have them abstaining from the forementioned evils, so as not to name them with delight, and without detestation; "Let it not be once named among you."

6. Not only the outward act of filthiness, but also lascivious filthy discourse is to be refrained from, as that which is an evidence of inward love to that sin, Matt. xii. 34, and maketh way for the outward committing of it, not only by ourselves, while the inward flame of lust is blown up by the bellows of filthy speeches, James iii. 6, but also by others, who are easily infected by the pestilential breath of evil communications, 1 Cor. xv. 33; for he will not have those evils so much as spoken of among them with delight and without detestation; "Let it not be once named among you."

7. The only life becometh saints, is to keep themselves pure in heart, in tongue, in hand, from the pollutions of fleshly lusts, and the immoderate love of worldly goods: and in so far as those are given way to by professed saints, they walk unworthy of their high and heavenly calling; do stain their profession; and declare themselves unworthy of the name of saints: for he sheweth that not practising those evils, and inward detestation of them, made evident by their not speaking of them, was such a carriage as "becometh saints."

VER. 4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

In this verse he forbiddeth other three vices, which belong mainly to the tongue. 1. Filthiness, whereby is meant, in general, whatsoever is contrary to decency and Christian gravity or modesty, whether in deeds, words, or outward gesture and adorning of the body: for so the word is used, 1 Cor. xi. 6; but here, because this sin and the rest are opposed to giving of thanks, it seemeth to be restricted to filthy speaking, or speaking of those things which belong to the lust of uncleanness. 2. Foolish talking, which as being contradistinct to the vice which goeth before, and to that which followeth after, doth comprehend all impertinent, superfluous, rash and roving discourse, which doth rather bewray the speaker's folly and indiscretion, than any way edify the hearers, though it be neither filthy speaking, nor satiric jesting. 3. Jest-ing; the word in the original is sometimes taken in a good sense, and so it signifieth a dexterity in allaying (when it is necessary so to do) the too much severity of countenance and discourse with a quick and honest sport, for begetting honest recreation and moderate laughter; that thereby the mind may be the more fitted to go about serious things in a serious manner, Eccles. iii. 4. Such honest and sometimes piercing ironies we find used by holy men in Scripture, 1 Kings xviii. 27, Phil. iii. 2. But here it is taken in an evil sense for scurrility, when men do make it their exercise to show the sharpness of their wit in jesting, and to beget not moderate recreation of spirit in order to their fitting for a more serious purpose, but immoderate laughter

and carnal mirth in the hearers; and especially, when, in order to this end, they spare not offensive jests by tart reflections upon the way, gesture, yea, and personal imperfections of others; nor yet profane and impious jests, by wresting Scripture to express the conceptions of their light and wanton wits; now the apostle forbiddeth all those three, because they are "not convenient," or beseeching to saints, so that this reason is coincident with the former, ver. 3. And in opposition to all those, he recommendeth unto them for their mutual cheering, and edifying one another by discourse when they should meet, rather to recount what favours they had received from God, and to bless him for them.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there are many ways by which a man may transgress with his tongue, so we ought to guard against all transgressions of that kind; not only those which natural reason would blush to patronize, but others also which are pleaded for by many, and defended as laudable strains of a quick wit; for he forbiddeth not only "filthiness," but also "foolish talking and jesting."

2. Satan and corrupt nature do take advantage of men's natural temper and inclination, even of that which in itself is not sinful, thereby to stir them to sinful courses to get their inclination satisfied; for from this sociable temper and inclination in men to entertain one another by discourse, he taketh advantage to put them upon those sins of "filthy speaking, foolish talking, and jesting."

3. It is a task of no small difficulty to keep within the bounds of lawful and allowed mirth, and recreation, especially in recreating our spirits by pleasant and delightful discourse, so that we exceed not either in matter or manner; considering that what is inoffensive at one time and place, and to some persons, may be irritating and offensive at and to others: for therefore it seemeth the apostle designeth this vice in speech by that name, which, as I show, agreeth also to that which is lawful and allowed, implying, that in this particular there is an easy passage from what is allowed to that which is forbidden; "and jesting," saith he.

4. It is not sufficient for ministers to forbid and reprove sins under such and such general heads; but seeing people either through ignorance cannot, or wickedness will not see, or laziness care not to see the evil of several particular sins contained under those general heads; therefore they are bound in their reproofs and prohibitions to fall upon the particular branches and instances of that evil, which they speak against: for the apostle, chap. iv. ver. 29, having spoken against corrupt communication in the general, doth here enumerate three distinct branches of that evil; "filthy speaking, foolish talking, and jesting."

5. Called saints and Christians should be so tender in walking, as that they scare not only at those evils which are palpably gross and cried out against by all; but also at every other thing which is unbeseeming their profession, or inconvenient and disadvantageous to the gospel or their own peace; for the apostle dissuadeth from

those sins upon this ground, that they "are not convenient."

6. A choice remedy against filthy speaking, foolish talking, jesting, and other sins in our ordinary communication, is to have our hearts always kept so sensible of God's goodness, and so desirous to express what sense we have thereof unto others, that whenever occasion offereth, we may gladly lay hold on that subject rather than on any other, and thereby provoke others to do the like; for so we should not be necessitated (as oft times in a kind we are) to fall upon sinful, vain, and idle communication, through penury and want of better purpose: hence the apostle, as a remedy against the fore-mentioned evils, prescribeth "giving of thanks."

7. There is not any case incident to a Christian, but, if he search thoroughly, there will be found some ground for thanksgiving and rejoicing, though not in himself, yet in God's dealing with him, whether for mercies bestowed, or judgments not inflicted, Phil. ii. 27; for while Paul commandeth them to exercise themselves, and cheer up one another with giving of thanks, instead of foolish talking and jesting, he supposeth there will be always reason of thanksgiving; "But rather giving of thanks."

8. Though saints may, and are bound sometimes, and in some cases, to confess their faults one to another, James v. 16, and consequently may regret their spiritual losses and decay; yea, and may also speak of what concerneth their worldly affairs, Gen. xxxi. 38; yet it is not only most seemly, but also a thriving way for the inward man, not to dwell always upon heartless regrets for what they want; but to add, at least a mixture of cheerful acknowledgment of what they already have, giving hearty thanks to God for it: for as the apostle doth not astrict them only to giving of thanks in their conference and discourse; so he doth recommend it, as the choicest subject to be most frequently insisted on: "But rather giving of thanks."

VER. 5. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

He doth further enforce the dehortation by a new argument, wherein is more of terror than in the former; and that it may be more terrible and pungent, he appealeth to their own conscience and knowledge for the truth of what he is to affirm, to wit, that all impenitent persisters (for of such only this and the like threatenings are to be understood, Jer. xviii. 7, 8,) in any of those three vices mentioned, ver. 3, (which holdeth also by proportion in the other three, mentioned ver. 4, as being so near of kin to the former,) were deprived of all present right unto, and should never come to the possession of that blessed state of eternal glory in heaven: which glorious state is here called a "kingdom and inheritance," (see reasons hereof upon Gal. v. 21, Doct. 9,) and "the kingdom of Christ," because it is his, as he is Mediator, by donation from the Father, Psal. ii. 8, in so far as the Father hath intrust-

ed him with the administration of the kingdom of grace here, Matt. xxviii. 18; by which means, an entrance is made for the elect into the kingdom of glory, John xiv. 2, 3. It is called also "the kingdom of God," (or the whole persons of the blessed Trinity, distinct from Christ as Mediator,) because it is God's by original right, and as absolute king of this kingdom, who is accountable to none, 1 Cor. xv. 28. This argument is further strengthened by joining another upon the by with it; while he deterreth them from one of the fore-mentioned evils, to wit, "covetousness," by calling the covetous man an idolater, because he setteth his prime affections of love and confidence upon riches, 1 Tim. vi. 10, Prov. xviii. 11; holdeth them for an universal good, sufficient for all things, Luke xii. 19, as God only is, 2 Cor. ix. 8; and because he beareth such respect unto them, that he dare not freely make use of them, Eccles. vi. 2, and serveth them with his heart as some Godhead, Matt. vi. 24.

Hence learn, 1. So strong is the interest of sin, even in the best, and so violent are those temptations especially, which drive men towards the fulfilling of their fleshly lusts; that, although a man be convinced of the great evil which is in them, and the loss of heaven which doth follow upon his lying in them, yet there is no small hazard, when such temptations are presented, of yielding to them: for he taketh it for granted they knew the hazard of living in those sins, and yet doth see it necessary to set them on their guard against them; for "this ye know, that no whoremonger," &c.

2. The Lord's servants are not to flatter people in any beloved sin, upon pretence of rendering them thereby more tractable and obedient in other things; but must discover the evil of all sin, excepting none, though it were never so generally practised, yea, and pleaded for by those to whom they preach: for this sin of uncleanness, chiefly of fornication, was commonly practised and pleaded for as no sin among the Gentiles; yet Paul at his first preaching the gospel to these Ephesians, had spoken against it, and convinced them of the ill which is in it: hence he saith so confidently, "for this ye know, that no whoremonger hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ."

3. As this doth highly aggrege [aggravate] a sin, that it is committed against our knowledge, so the more and weightier aggravations that any sin is liable unto, when it is committed, we ought to be the more deterred from the committing of it; for he mindeth them of their knowing the danger that would follow upon those sins, hereby implying their guilt would be the more weighty, if they should commit them, that so they might be deterred from them; "For this ye know, that no whoremonger," &c.

4. Prohibitions and threatenings denounced in Scripture against any gross external sin, are to be extended unto all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances of that sin, and provocations to it: for this threatening against whoredom and uncleanness is to be applied unto filthy speaking, foolish talking, jesting, (as being either causes, occasions, appearances of, or provocations unto those,) otherwise the threatening would not be of

force to press the former dehortation in its full latitude: "No whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance."

5. The doleful sad event, and dreadful consequence of sin, would be seriously represented by Christ's servants unto the Lord's people, and by people to their own conscience; there being nothing of greater force to cool the vehement heat of sinful lusts, than the frequent and serious consideration of their dreadful issue: for Paul, to scare them from fornication and uncleanness, presenteth unto them the event of all such work, even loss of heaven and happiness; "No whoremonger hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ."

6. The reign of sin in the heart cannot consist with true grace and a right to heaven; and therefore the truly regenerate, in whom the seed of God abideth, are never so far left of God, as that sin should reign in them, and they give willing obedience to it with the full sway and consent of the heart. There must be always a party acting for God in some degree, less or more, within them, at least not consenting to act against him, even when they are at the worst, and possibly overcome with some gross temptation; in which respect they cannot be a whoremonger, unclean or covetous person here spoken of, to wit, one in whom such sins reign: for saith he, none such "have any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ." He speaketh of somewhat which they presently want, and others have, which must be a right to the kingdom of glory, or a present portion in the kingdom of grace.

7. To whatsoever a man doth give that outward or inward worship and service, which is only due to God, that thing, though it were never so base, is that man's god, who is thereby rendered guilty of idolatry, and of giving divine worship unto a false god, though he think not so: for the covetous man is called an idolater, and consequently riches are his god; because he setteth his prime affections of love and confidence upon them in that measure which is only due to God; "Nor covetous man, who is an idolater."

8. There is no access for lost sinners unto the kingdom of God in glory, but by Jesus Christ the Mediator, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and without whom none cometh unto the Father, John xiv. 6; for it is "the kingdom of Christ and of God?" Christ is first named, because we make entrance by him in this kingdom.

VER. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

The apostle in this verse doth first give them a watchword to guard against the suggestions of any who would labour to persuade them that either the practices reprov'd were no sins at all, or at least not so dangerous as he affirmed; and calleth all such suggestions "vain," or deceiving "words," as having no solidity of truth in them, but only some plausible pretext. Secondly, he confirmeth, and further strengtheneth the former argument, while he sheweth that not only these

sins do exclude from heaven, but also because of those, "God's wrath," that is, temporal and eternal judgments, the effects of God's wrath, or of his holy, sin-pursuing justice, doth come, and is always, and at all times, coming "upon the children of disobedience," that is, those who, having willingly hardened themselves in wickedness, are judiciously plagued with hardness of heart. See upon chap. ii. ver. 3.

DOCTRINES.

1. The servants of Jesus Christ ought to be thorough and serious in the reproof of sin, not doing the work of the Lord negligently, or by halves; they must not only start and discover those sins which the Lord's people are in hazard to be surprised with, and to lay open the dangerous, dreadful, and doleful consequences of living in them; but also pursue them through all the lurking holes and subtleties of specious pretences and feckless excuses, under which they use to lurk, until no place of refuge be left for them in people's hearts: for so doth Paul, having forbidden those evils, and shown the dangerous consequence of living in them, he striketh off at one word the fig-tree leaves of all such vain excuses whereby sinners use to plead for them; "Let no man deceive you with vain words," saith he.

2. So corrupt and fleshly are we by nature, that we are not only prone and bent to commit sin, but also ingenious and witty to excuse and extenuate our sin, and thereby to seduce our own hearts into a belief that either sin is no sin, or that we shall be free of judgment, though we live in sin: for those who labour to deceive others this way, by making them think light of sin, do first deceive themselves; "Let no man deceive you with vain words," saith he.

3. It is the usual course and strain of those who have given themselves over unto the slavery of sin, to use the utmost of their wit and endeavours to draw on others to do the like, and for this end to deceive them, by making them believe that sins are but petty slips, small escapes, human infirmities, that God's patience suffereth all things, that his grace pardoneth every thing, that no man can be perfect, and the rarest saints have fallen in as great faults, and such like vain words, which the apostle doth here guard against; "Let no man deceive you with vain words."

4. All such opinions and reasonings as tend to cast a covering over sin, to extenuate and hide the vileness of it, and the terror of judgment belonging to it, are but vain, even spider's webs, sandy foundations, fig-tree leaves, untemper'd mortar, and will in end but mock all those who listen to them: for so doth the apostle affirm of them, "Let no man deceive you with vain words."

5. Though we are to fear and avoid sin principally because it is sin, and displeasing to God, supposing there were no hell nor punishment due to sin, Gen. xxxix. 9; yet, we may and ought in the second place fear and abstain from it, because it draweth down God's wrath and judgment: for he holdeth forth the terror of God's wrath as an argument to scare them from

those sins ; for, " Because of these things cometh the wrath."

6. The terrible threatenings denounced in Scripture against such and such sinners, some whereof declare the sinner's exclusion from heaven, and others his unspeakable torment in hell, are verified not in all who have once or often fallen in any such sins, but in those only, who have hardened themselves in them, rejecting all admonitions to the contrary, and do remain obstinate and impenitent until death : for he expoundeth whom he meaneth by the whoremongers, whom he threatened, ver. 5, even " children of disobedience," that is, such as remain obstinate, and will not be persuaded, as the word rendered " disobedience " doth signify.

7. See several other doctrines from the like words, upon Col. iii. ver. 6.

VER. 7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Here is a second precept more general than the first, and inferred as a conclusion from the former argument, whereby he doth in general dehorth them from partaking, or concurring with such obstinate sinners, either in the forementioned sins, or any other, wherewith they polluted themselves and drew down the stroke of God's wrath, as they would not partake with them in their judgments ; for so he doth explain this precept, ver. 11.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the Lord doth of purpose inflict most memorable judgments upon obstinate sinners, even in this life ; that thereby, as by one mean amongst many other, he may teach and instruct his own called children to beware of their sins ; so, then do we make right use of God's judgments upon such godless sinners, when we are not idle spectators of them, as if we were not concerned in them, Luke xiii. 2, 3 ; or marmurers against the severity of God's justice manifested in them, Num. xvi. 41, but do take up the voice of those rods, as speaking unto and pressing upon ourselves the exercise of repentance and tender walking, in abstaining from such like sins for which they are smitten : for from what he spoke of God's wrath coming upon the children of disobedience, he inferreth this as a most native use, " Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

2. Though there be some sins, for which the Lord doth punish obstinate sinners more than others, which usually are more clearly written upon their rods, Judges i. 7 ; yet, it is our wisdom to look upon their judgments, as speaking lessons, and real warnings, not only against those evils, but all others also, whereof they are guilty : for he inferreth that they would not partake with them, not only in the forementioned sins, for which in a special manner wrath came upon them, but also in any sins of theirs whatsoever, while he saith in general, " Be ye not therefore partakers with them."

3. The Lord taketh notice of, and doth accordingly punish sinners, not only who are without the church and heathens, but also those who are

within the church, and do profess subjection unto divine ordinances ; and not only ringleaders, and chief actors in a sinful course, but also all assistants, abettors, and who in any measure partake of the sins of others, whether by counselling, 2 Sam. xiii. 5, alluring, Prov. i. 10, consenting, 1 Kings xxi. 19, connivance, 1 Sam. iii. 13, or applauding sin when it is committed, Rom. i. 32 ; for he will have the converted Ephesians take warning from those judgments, which were inflicted upon the godless heathens, and so as not to partake with them in their sins, implying God would not spare them more than others ; " Be ye not therefore partakers with them."

VER. 8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light :

In this verse, there is, first, an argument to enforce the former dehoration, taken from that blessed change which was wrought in them from darkness to light, " they were once darkness : " whereby is meant their estate before conversion : and it comprehendeth under it, ignorance of God, and of the way to heaven, 1 John ii. 8 ; a godless and profane life, flowing from a wicked and unrenewed heart, 1 John i. 6, together with subjection unto all miseries and calamities following upon the former, and especially to the wrath and curse of God : for a sad disconsolate case goeth under the name of " darkness," Amos v. 18—20 ; this is the state under the which they once were, and all unregenerate men yet are : they are in all those respects, not only dark, but " darkness " in the abstract, as having nothing of the contrary light in them. But they were " now light : " whereby is meant that estate wherein they now were, being converted, which is opposed to their former estate of darkness, and comprehendeth under it the saving knowledge of God in Christ, Isa. ix. 1, 2, a life conform to God's law, which shineth forth in the rays and beams of good works, as a light unto others, Matt. v. 16 ; together with deliverance from God's wrath, and restitution to his favour, with joy, peace, and filial confidence flowing from the sense of those : for a lightsome and comfortable case goeth usually under the name of light, Psa. xviii. 28 ; this is the state, wherein the truly regenerate are ; they are in all those respects not only lightsome, splendid and shining, but " light " in the abstract, not as if there were no darkness in them at all, 1 John i. 8, Acts xiv. 22 ; for in that respect only God himself is light, 1 John i. 5, but because they are so " in the Lord," to wit, Christ, (chap. iv. 5,) as he here declareth, who not only is the purchaser and worker of that measure of the light of knowledge, holiness, and of joy and peace following thereupon, which the regenerate do already enjoy, John i. 9 ; but also his most perfect light of righteousness, knowledge, wisdom, and redemption, is imputed to them, 2 Cor. v. 21 ; so that the dregs and remainders of ignorance and corruption in themselves, are not laid to their charge, Numb. xxiii. 21. The apostle, next, from this argument, doth infer the affirmative of the former negative pre-

cept, ver. 7, to wit, that therefore they should "walk as children of the light," that is, answerably unto that blessed state of light to which they were called, as being now children of light, that is, not only born of God, 1 John ii. 29, (who is that light unaccessible, 1 Tim. vi. 16,) by the preaching of the word, James i. 18, which is called "light," Ps. cxix. 105, but also were endued with the light of knowledge and holiness : in which respect, those who are endued with wisdom are called children of wisdom, Matt. xi. 19.

Hence, learn, 1. It concerneth those in whom God hath wrought any saving change, as to be reflecting frequently upon that miserable estate wherein they once were; so to look upon it under that variety of notions and similitudes whereby it is expressed in Scripture; there being not any one expression so comprehensive, or similitude so far extended, as to point out all the dool [sorrow], woe, and misery which is in it, and that hereby the heart may be the more sensibly affected with it : for the apostle hath now several times in this epistle represented it to their view, and at every time almost under a different notion and similitude; the latter always expressing somewhat which was not reached by the former. See chap. ii. ver. 1—3, 12, 13, 19, and chap. iv. ver. 17—19, and here again, he mindeth them of it under the name of "darkness;" "for ye were sometimes darkness."

2. The child of God ought so to remember what he once by nature was, as not to question, far less deny, but confidently avow, what he now by grace is : and that because not only the joint consideration of both, maketh them shine forth more clearly in their own colours; but also our fixing our eye upon the former, without avowing the latter, doth breed discouragement, unthankfulness, and in progress of time heartless despair of an outgate from the woful state wherein we apprehend ourselves yet to be : for the apostle representeth to their view both those jointly; "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light."

3. Believers can never attain to read the happiness of their present state through grace, so long as they fix their eye only upon what they are in themselves : nor yet until they consider what they are in Christ, and by virtue of that fulness of perfections in him, which not only floweth forth to them in the streams according to their measure, John i. 16, but also is imputed to them in the fountain, 1 Cor. v. 21 ; and therefore may be looked upon by them as their own ; for although he calleth them "darkness" absolutely, and in themselves; yet "they are light," not in themselves, "but in the Lord Christ."

4. Our former darkness of ignorance and profanity, wherein we have for a long time lived, is so far from being an argument to make us continue in our former woful course; that, on the contrary, we ought from the consideration thereof be incited to take up ourselves and live more tenderly for the time to come; seeing the time past of our life may suffice us to have walked in a godless course, 1 Pet. iv. 3, for Paul maketh this an argument, why they should not any longer partake with obstinate sinners in their

godless course : for, saith he, "Ye were sometimes darkness."

5. Neither long continuance in sin already, even to weariness, nor yet any conviction of the shame and damage which do attend it, are sufficient to make a man abandon and quit it thoroughly, except there be a gracious change wrought in him, chiefly as to his inward state, from that which he sometimes was : for he mentioneth this gracious change of their inward state, as that wherein the strength of the present argument doth lie, whereby he would dissuade them from being partakers with them; "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord."

6. As all spiritual privileges in general are bestowed upon us that we may improve them, both for our comfort, and also for enabling and inciting to duty; so the more we enjoy of light, whether external light in preaching of the word, or the internal light of knowledge in the mind, we ought to improve it the more by walking according to that light; else our condemnation shall be greater, John iii. 18; for from their privilege of being "light in the Lord," he inferreth "walk as children of light."

VER. 9. (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

The apostle, in way of parenthesis, doth give a reason of the former consequence, or why their being "now light in the Lord" did bind them "to walk as children of light;" and consequently, not to partake with obstinate sinners in their sin: and withal, sheweth wherein that walking doth consist. The reason is taken from the new creature and habits of grace in the heart, called here the "Spirit," as Rom. vii. 25, Gal. v. 22; and are the same with the light of grace wrought by the Spirit of God, spoken of ver. 8. Now, he sheweth the fruit of this light, or of those gracious habits, consisteth in the exercise of all Christian virtues, which are here summed up in three. 1. "Goodness," whereby we are inclined to communicate what good is in us for the advantage of our neighbour, both in his spiritual, 1 Pet. iv. 10, and bodily, Gal. vi. 10, estate. 2. "Righteousness," whereby we deal righteously in all our transactions with others. And, 3. "Truth," whereby we can carry ourselves sincerely, being free from error, hypocrisy, or dissimulation, whether towards God or men. So the force of the argument cometh to this, such a walking as he did enjoin, was the native fruit and result of their being made light in the Lord by the Spirit of God; and therefore they were obliged to it.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christ's ministers not only to press upon the Lord's people the practice of holiness in general, but also to condescend upon, and accordingly to press the exercise of those particular virtues, both to God and men, wherein holiness doth consist; otherwise people will readily place most of holiness in those things where it consisteth least, Matt. xxiii. 23, for Paul, having exhorted them to walk as children of the light, doth here show wherein that walking doth

consist, even "in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

2. None can walk as a child of light, or practise those duties wherein such a walk consisteth, in a way acceptable to God, but he who is a child of light truly regenerate, and aceth from a principle of grace in the heart. Whatever floweth from an unrenewed heart, how specious soever, is but a shadow, and imperfect imitation of the child of light in this Christian walk, as an ape would imitate a man, or a violent motion doth resemble that which is natural, and floweth from an inward principle; for he sheweth the exercise of goodness, righteousness, and truth, wherein our walking as a child of light consisteth, is the fruit of the Spirit, or of the root of grace in the heart, wrought by the Spirit of God; "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness," &c.

3. As it concerneth Christians to walk suitably unto their state and privileges; so they would seriously consider, in order to their walking thus, that holiness of life is the native fruit and result of their being in a gracious state, or of the work of grace in the heart; and therefore, that they are not only obliged to lead an holy life in way of duty and gratitude, but a necessity also doth lie upon them to it, if so they be renewed, and as they would not evidence themselves to be yet in their unrenewed state; for having exhorted them to walk as children of light, or suitably to the state of grace, he enforceth the exhortation by showing that such a walking is the native fruit and necessary result of being in such a state; "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness," &c.

4. A facility and easiness to communicate what is in us for our neighbour's good and advantage, doth well consist with the exercise of righteousness, whereby we give every man his due, and do require of him what is our due from him: for he conjoineth the exercise of those two, while he saith, "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness."

5. As the grace of sincerity and freedom from dissimulation and hypocrisy, is a necessary ingredient in the exercise of all other virtues; so our walking answerably unto that state of light, unto which we are called, must be extended unto duties of all sorts; not only to duties of goodness and righteousness towards our neighbour, but also to duties towards God, so as we embrace those truths which he holdeth forth in Scripture, without all mixture of error, yea, and take him for our party in every duty, as being the only judge of our sincerity; for, he saith, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth."

VER. 10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Before the apostle use any more arguments to enforce the former precept, he doth, first, resume and explain the precept itself. And, first, he explaineth the affirmative part thereof, by giving one direction, necessary to be practised by those who would walk as children of light, even that by diligent search and inquiry they prove and try according to God's will revealed in his word,

Isa. viii. 20, what is acceptable and well pleasing unto him in every step of their way.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is no walking as a child of light, or suitably unto that gracious state to which we are called, except we conform ourselves not unto this world, Rom. xii. 2, or to what may bring about our own advantage, and so gratify our lusts, Matt. v. 29, but unto what is acceptable to God, and prescribed unto us as the rule of duty in his word; for this proving of what is acceptable unto him is required not for itself, or to rest thereon, but to regulate our practice accordingly, see ver. 11, Doct. 1; and is called for as a necessary concomitant of walking like children of light, as is clear from the grammatical construction, according to which this verse is to be joined with the close of the eighth so that it runneth thus, "Walk as children of the light—proving what is acceptable."

2. We cannot conform ourselves unto what is acceptable to the Lord, and consequently cannot walk as children of life, except we make a serious search and inquiry into the rule of duty and acceptance revealed in the word, yea, and do what we do, that we may come up to that rule: and therefore we walk not acceptably, when either we do things rashly without deliberation, Prov. xix. 2, or doubtfully after deliberation, Rom. xiv. 23, yea, nor when the thing done is in itself right and acceptable, but we do it not from that ground, but to gratify our own lusts, Matt. vi. 2, or the lusts of others, Gal. i. 10; for, in order to this walking, he requirith them "to prove what is acceptable to the Lord," as the rule by which they were to walk.

3. It is not sufficient to make this inquiry in order to some few and weighty actions of our life, but in order to all, whether of greater or lesser concernment, whether advantage or loss may probably follow upon our conforming of ourselves unto this rule: for the direction is indefinite, without any limitation or restriction, upon this action or that; and therefore it ought to be extended unto all; "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."

4. The finding out of what is acceptable unto the Lord, especially in some intricate cases, is not easily attained; there must be an accurate search, together with an exercising ourselves in the practice of those things which we already know to be acceptable, that so we may experimentally know them to be such, and get our knowledge bettered in those things whereof we are yet ignorant, John vii. 17; for the word rendered "proving," signifieth an accurate proof, not so much by argument, as by trial and experience, as gold is tried in the fire, James i. 12: "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."

VER. 11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

He explaineth next the negative part of the former precept, as it was expressed, ver. 7. First, by discharging them to be accessory (any of those ways mentioned, ver. 7, Doct. 3.) to the sins of

wicked men, called here "works of darkness," because they flow usually from the darkness of ignorance, Acts iii. 17, and are the works of un-renewed men, who are nothing but darkness, (see ver. 8,) are contrary to the light of God's revealed will, John iii. 20, and are usually committed in the dark, the very actors being ashamed to do them openly, 1 Thess. v. 7, and because they bring those who live and die in them without repentance, unto utter darkness, Matt. xxv. 30. They are also called "unfruitful works;" because they not only bring no advantage unto those who do commit them, Rom. vi. 21, but also much hurt and damage, even the wages of sin, which is death, Rom. vi. 23. Next, by commanding them to reprove convincingly those works of darkness, and the parties guilty of them, and this, though chiefly by their contrary good works, Heb. xi. 7, yet not only by those, but also by the word of admonition and reproof, Eccles. vii. 5, as occasion should offer, and God's glory with the edification of their neighbour should seem unto spiritual prudence to call for it.

Besides, what is already observed from a parallel place, ver. 7, Doct. 3, hence learn, 1. Then do we make an approved search and inquiry into what is acceptable unto the Lord, when we do not satisfy ourselves with the naked knowledge of what he approveth, Rom. ii. 18, nor yet do only labour to defend by force of reason, or sufferings, what we find to be truth, after search, against gainsayers, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3; but do also make it the rule of practice, by practising or forbearing accordingly; for the apostle, having commanded them, ver. 10, "to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord," doth here enjoin them to abstain from that which they could not but by searching find to be displeasing to him, while he saith, "and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

2. Though we are not simply, and in all cases, to abstain from the fellowship of wicked men, but may freely converse with such of them as we are bound unto, either by the law of necessity, Psa. cxx. 5, 6, or by any civil, 1 Pet. ii. 18, religious, 1 Cor. vii. 12, or natural bond, Eph. vi. 1, 2, yet no tie of that kind doth give us warrant to partake with them in their sins; and therefore we are to eschew all unnecessary and voluntary fellowship and familiarity with them, Psa. xxvi. 4, lest thereby we be drawn to walk in their ways, Prov. xxii. 24, 25, and they be hardened in their evil course, and kept from being ashamed, 2 Thess. iii. 14, for he forbiddeth absolutely all fellowship with them in their sins, and consequently whatever may bring us under that hazard, if so it can be eschewed, without the neglect of any other duty; "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

3. We ought to look upon sin in its blackest colours of shame, disgrace, loss of our time, strength, and of all other expense, consumed upon it, together with the damage, both here and hereafter, which followeth upon it, and lay aside the consideration of those pleasant deceitful baits, which Satan doth busk [deck] it with to make it more taking; that so we may be the more deterred from it: for Paul giveth sin a name implying all those and much more, that the very name given

to it may scare them from it, while he calleth it "the unfruitful works of darkness."

4. Though the command enjoining to reprove the sins of others, be an affirmative precept, and therefore not binding unto all, with relation to all persons, at all times, and in all cases, and Christ himself forbiddeth to cast the pearl of precious reproof before dogs or swine, Matt. vii. 6, that is, such who mock the word of admonition, or prove more enraged by it, whom we are to reprove, not so much by conversing with them, or by speaking to them, as by fleeing from them; yet as to others, our not reproving of their sin, when occasion offereth, and God's glory with their edification seemeth to call for it, is a sinful partaking with them in their sin: for, having discharged them to have fellowship with the works of darkness, he subjoineth, "but rather reprove them," implying that otherwise they would have fellowship with them.

5. Though this duty of labouring to reclaim others from sin by convincing reproofs, whether in words, or in the contrary work, ought mainly to be discharged unto such as have nearest relation to us, Eph. vi. 4, or whom we have a more special charge of, 1 Thess. v. 12, or whom we are most intimate with in spiritual bonds and fellowship, 1 Thess. v. 14, yet we are not to neglect this duty towards others, who stand not under such near relations to us, no not to those, concerning whom we have strong grounds to fear that they are yet un-renewed, and enemies in their hearts to Jesus Christ, so long, at least, as all hopes of prevailing with them by that mean are not cut off, 1 Cor. vii. 16, for he commandeth them here to reprove the sins even of un-renewed pagans, called therefore "the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them," saith he.

VER. 12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

He doth now confirm the precept thus explained: and, first, he enforceth the dissuasive "from having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," by an argument taken from the abominable filthiness of those sins which the wicked pagans committed in secret, that they might eschew public shame, which was such that it was a shame even to speak of them, or to hear them spoken of; leaving them to gather it was much more shameful to act them, or to be any ways accessory unto the acting of them.

DOCTRINES.

1. There should be such a holy bashfulness in converted Christians as to think shame in speech to utter, at least without detestation, those things which godless sinners are not so much ashamed to practise: and especially ministers in their public preachings would be very modest and sparing in the deciphering of filthy sins, lest they thereby defile their own tongues, offend the ears of some, and do teach others how to commit that sin which they pretend to reprove: for Paul giveth this as a reason, not only why they should

not communicate with the unfruitful works of darkness, but also why he did not make express mention of those works in particular; "for it is a shame even to speak of those things," saith he.

2. As all conscience of right and wrong, together with fear and shame following upon doing wrong, be not fully extinct in the unrenewed man; so those small remainders are not effectual to restrain them from what is wrong, but being overpowered with prevalent atheism, do give them full liberty to act abominable wickedness, if so they can hide it from the eyes of men, without any effectual restraint from the all-seeing eye of God; for conscience of the dishonesty which was in those unfruitful works of darkness made them eschew the eyes of men, but, notwithstanding, they committed them in secret: "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

3. As secrecy and solitariness are most obnoxious to foulest temptations, especially to those which tend to satisfy the lust of uncleanness, Gen. xxxix. 11, 12, and therefore would be eschewed by all, 1 Thess. v. 22, much less sought after by any, Prov. vii. 8—10; so when men do not seek the veil of secrecy to cover their sins, but do glory in their shame, and dare with Absalom (2 Sam. xvi. 22,) commit those sins openly and before the sun, which very common honesty and a natural instinct would seek to cover, it speaketh a man more corrupt than the very grossest of pagans, who hath put out the very common principles of natural honesty, and made his own conscience dead and senseless, so that he knoweth not shame, Zeph. iii. 5; for even the pagans, whose sins he doth here aggregate [aggravate], did take the benefit of secrecy to cover their villainies; "Which are done of them in secret," saith he.

VER. 13. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

He doth next enforce the exhortation to reprove those works of darkness, first, by an argument taken from one excellent use of admonition and reproof, while he sheweth that those secret sins of wicked men, being "reprov'd," are "by the light," whether of God's word in the mouth of the reprov'er, or of his holy life, "made manifest" in their black and ugly colours; to wit, not so much unto others, as unto the actors and authors of them. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 24.) Next, by proving that the light of reproof attaineth this end from the nature of light, which is to make all things that are within its reach manifest and conspicuous; for the words in the original do read better thus, "for light is that which manifesteth all things."

DOCTRINES.

1. The discovery and conviction of sin in its vileness, is of necessary and profitable use unto the sinner, as being the first step towards contrition, Acts ii. 36, with 37, and consequently to faith in Jesus Christ and repentance unto life, Acts ii. 37, with 38; for he maketh this an excellent use of reproof, and that which should be

aimed at by the reprov'er, even that sin be made manifest in its vileness to the sinner; "For all things that are reprov'd are made manifest."

2. It is not a naked sight and knowledge that sin is sin, and in some measure shameful, which is of any great use to the sinner, but a sight of it in its vilest colours, as it is a breach of God's most holy law, enmity against the great God, and a bringer down of God's eternal wrath: for those heathens had some knowledge of sin, and of the shame that was in it, and therefore they did run to secret with it; and yet he speaketh here of a further discovery and manifestation of it by the light of reproof, which was useful and necessary; "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest."

3. The Lord doth sometimes bless not only public preaching, but also the word of reproof in the mouth of private Christians, and the example of their holy life, for making godless sinners take occasion thence to reflect upon themselves, and therein, as in a glass, to see the filthy vileness of their beloved sins, and to judge themselves for them; for he saith, "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light;" to wit, the light of verbal or real reproof, held forth even by private Christians: for he doth not speak here to ministers only.

4. The probable good which God may bring about to the party reprov'd by the means of our reproof, should have more of weight to incite us towards the making conscience of this duty than the feared inconvenience to ourselves, arising from the parties' displeasure, should have to scare us from it: for Paul will have us to set upon this duty, because of our neighbour's good, which probably will be brought about by it; "reprove them," saith he, "for all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light."

5. As there is no duty of the success whereof we use to be more diffident than that of reprov'ing the sins of others, so there is not any duty the success whereof we have better ground to be persuaded of, even than of this, that discovery of sin to the sinner's conscience, either to his conversion or further obduration, shall follow upon a timely and well-guided reproof: for he proveth that this effect shall follow upon reproof, as natively as the discovery of things dark and hid doth follow upon light; "For that is light," saith he, "which discovereth all things."

VER. 14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Here is a second argument to enforce the duty of reprov'ing those unfruitful works of darkness, which also confirmeth the former, to wit, that by reprov'ing them they should be made manifest. The argument is taken from God's own example, who in his word doth reprove the world of sin, and thereby conveyeth the light of Jesus Christ unto them, as the apostle proveth, by showing what is God's great work and design through his whole word, whereof this verse is a short sum; though it seemeth more particularly to relate unto Isa. lx. 1, 2, from which this place is thought

to be cited, with some variation in the words, but none in the purpose: which design is threefold; the first branch whereof is here implied, even to convince all unrenewed men especially, how woful and dangerous their present case is, and that it is a spiritual sleep and death. First, a "sleep," because the carnal man hath all his spiritual senses bound up, Isa. xliii. 8, having no spiritual fellowship with those who live a new life, Eph. iv. 18, doth dream and fancy that he seeth, heareth, and converseth with them, Rev. iii. 17, which he will after find to be but a mere fancy when his conscience doth rouse him up, Rom. vii. 9, neither hath he power over himself, but is exposed as a prey to Satan, or any who mindeth his spiritual hurt, 2 Tim. ii. 26; for such is the case of those naturally who are in a natural sleep. And, secondly, a "death," because the natural man hath not only his senses bound up, as in a sleep, but there is no spiritual power or faculty remaining in him to do any thing which is truly good, Rom. viii. 7, as a dead man hath no principle of life or vital action. The second branch of this great design is here expressed, which is to point out unto all such what is their duty in that case, even to awake and "rise from the dead," that is, in a word, to turn to God, to break off their sins by repentance, and to set about all the duties of holiness flowing from the principle of a new life. Which duty is here and elsewhere enjoined by God unto dead sinners; not that it is in their power, Jer. xiii. 23, but because it is their duty so to do, yea and such a duty as must be gone about, otherwise they cannot be saved, Luke xiii. 3, and because by such exhortations and commands, as by an outward mean, the Spirit of God doth effectually work that in them, which he requireth from them, Rom. x. 17. The third branch of this great design is, to encourage them unto this duty, from the promise of a greater measure of the light of knowledge, holiness, and comfort here (all which are comprehended under the name of "light;" see upon ver. 8,) and of glory hereafter, (called also "light," Col. i. 12,) to be given unto them by Christ upon their so doing.

DOCTRINES.

1. The pains which God doth take upon godless sinners, yet in nature, to awake them from the sleep of sin, and to draw them unto Christ, is a strong argument binding us to commiserate the case of such, and from pity towards them to endeavour in our stations to bring them out of that woful state wherein they are. Our obligation to help them is greater than his, besides that we are bound to work with God, and to further his design; for he enforceth upon them the duty of reproving those godless atheists, in order to their conviction and amendment, from God's example, who doth the like; "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest."

2. That God hath appointed reproof of sin to be the ordinary mean of awakening dead sinners, and of bringing them to Christ, and that he maketh use of this mean himself all along in his word in order to this end, should encourage us, as we have access, in our stations, to make use of that mean towards those with whom we converse,

as knowing that God may, and when he pleaseth, will, bless the mean appointed by himself, whatever unlikelihood there be otherwise of success: for he excite them to practise this duty from this, that God maketh use of reproof as the ordinary mean of bringing souls to Christ; "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest."

3. Scripture doth not consist so much in the formal words, as in the sense and meaning of those words; and therefore, though we cannot keep in memory the very formal words of Scripture, yet if we remember the sum of the purpose contained in those words, we may make use of it, as of the word of God, whether for confirmation of truth, refutation of error, exhortation to duty, or reproof of sin and vice, 2 Tim. iii. 16; for the apostle being to press this duty of reproving upon them from Scripture, doth not cite the very formal words of Scripture, but giveth the general drift of all Scripture in few words, or the sense and meaning of one particular scripture, to wit, of Isa. lx. 1, 2, from which this verse seemeth to be cited; "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest."

4. The first doctrine deduced from ver. 8, hath ground here also, in that he doth again mind them of their miserable case by nature, not only under the similitude of "death," formerly used, chap. ii. 1, but also of "sleeping."

5. Neither can an offer of Christ unto a sinner be savoury, nor a command to embrace this offer get entertainment, until first a discovery be made unto the sinner of his sad and miserable case by nature: for the Lord, in holding forth the offer of Christ, and commanding them to embrace it, doth so speak, as he first discovereth the woful case wherein they were, by the similitude of sleep and death, while he saith, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead."

6. Our utter inability to help ourselves, or to do any thing acceptable to God, contracted by Adam's fall, doth not weaken or abolish God's sovereign right and dominion over us, in so far as, though we be not able to do, yet he may justly require and exact of us to do; for though they were dead, and consequently unable to help themselves, yet he requireth them to awake and arise; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead."

7. Though it be the only power of God which quickeneth dead sinners, and bringeth them from nature unto grace, Col. i. 13, there being no principle of a spiritual life in us by nature, whereby we can quicken ourselves; yet the Lord is pleased to work upon us, not as upon senseless blocks, but as reasonable creatures, by commanding and persuading us to do that which is our duty (though not in our power) to do, and thereby, as a mean, conveying unto the elect the effectual working of his power, whereby he worketh in them what he requireth from them; for he commandeth those who are dead, to arise from the dead, and so maketh them to rise, Rom. iv. 17. "Arise from the dead."

8. Though the word of God for the most part be contrived in general precepts, threatenings, and promises, without express mention of one more than other, except in some general qualifications, to whom each of those in particular be-

long, John iii. 16, Gal. iii. 10, yet before a sinner be brought to Christ, the Spirit of God doth make particular application of those unto his conscience, as if they were directed unto him by name; and the more a minister doth labour to reach the consciences of people, by making particular application of general truths unto them, they are in a fairer way of gaining ground upon them, and doing good unto them by what they preach; for the apostle, holding forth a directory unto us, how to walk in order to the gaining of godless sinners, from the Lord's example, doth bring him in speaking, as it were, to every one in particular; "Awake thou, arise thou, Christ shall give thee light."

9. The holding forth of Christ's excellency, and of that excellent state of light, joy, comfort, knowledge, which, being once forfeited by Adam's fall, is again purchased by Christ, and to which he bringeth all such as do come unto him, is one of the strongest arguments (though others also must be made use of, Luke xiii. 3) to prevail, even with natural hearts, to make them willing in the day of God's power, and obedient to him when he doth call them; for Paul sheweth that even God himself doth make choice of this argument; "Arise—and Christ shall give thee light."

VER. 15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

Here is a new precept, the third in order of those which are contained in this chapter, and it is deduced also as a conclusion from what goeth before, to this purpose, that seeing they were now light in the Lord, ver. 8, and obliged not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to reprove them, ver. 10, therefore they would "see" to their "walk," or take accurate inspection of their life and conversation, whether in word or deed; and so see to their walk, as to be circumspect or precise in it, even willing to go to the outmost (as the word in the original doth signify) of what every command requireth, both for matter and manner, especially labouring as to approve themselves unto God; so to give no just cause of exception or offence at what we do unto others, no, not to those that are without, who are expressly mentioned, Col. iv. 5, where the same precept is in substance proposed: which precept so proposed, he doth, first, enforce by a reason; for the particle "as" doth not always make comparison, but sometimes rendereth a reason; and the reason is, that true wisdom doth consist in walking thus, and to walk otherwise is extreme folly.

DOCTRINES.

1. The more of light and knowledge a man hath received from God, he ought to take the more diligent heed that in all things he practise according to his light, seeing not only the way of such is most eyed by wicked men, who watch for his halting, Jer. xx. 10, but also, if he doth not walk the more circumspectly, he deserveth double stripes, Luke xii. 47; for this exhortation may be looked on as an inference from what he

saith, ver. 8, "ye are now light in the Lord—see then that ye walk circumspectly," saith he.

2. So many are the ways by which we may become accessory to other folk's sins, (see ver. 7, Doct. 3,) and so many are the snares which Satan and his instruments do lay in our way to entrap us, Eph. vi. 11, that if we walk not all the more circumspectly, we cannot eschew but we must partake one way or other with wicked men in their sins; for this exhortation may be looked upon also as an inference from what he said, ver. 11, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness—see then that ye walk circumspectly," saith he.

3. Those only are most fit to reprove sin in others to some good purpose, who walk most circumspectly, and live so as they cannot be justly blamed themselves; even the very righteous walking of such is a forcible reproof of sin in others, though they speak nothing, Heb. xi. 5, and otherwise their speaking will have no force, Matt. vii. 3, 4, besides that God doth usually bless the pains of such, Prov. x. 21: for this exhortation may be also looked upon as an inference from what he said, ver. 11, "but rather reprove them—see then that ye walk circumspectly."

4. That a man may walk accurately and circumspectly, coming up (so far as through grace he is able) to the utmost of what every command requireth, both for matter and manner, it is necessary that he walk, not rashly and indeliberately, but that he see and diligently consider antecedently to his acting, to wit, not only what he is to do, that it be neither evil, nor appearance of evil, 1 Thess. v. 22, nor an occasion leading to evil, Rom. xiii. 14, but also from what principle and fountain, Matt. vii. 17, 18, for what end, Matt. vi. 2, 5, and by what means, Job xiii. 7, 8, he intendeth to act in every thing which he is about to do; for in order to their circumspect walking, he requireth of them that they should "see," the word signifieth "to take heed, to see with attention," and "diligently to consider," Matt. vii. 3. "See then that ye walk circumspectly."

5. As those are only truly wise in God's account, whatever the world think of them, who labour to walk most exactly by the rule of God's word all along their christian course, so where this true and sanctified wisdom (which cometh from above) is, it will render itself evident, by making the person endowed with it walk circumspectly, so that he will foresee the evil of a course and eschew it, Prov. xxii. 3, search out the mind of God in every thing, understand it, Hos. xiv. 9, and observe it, Ps. cvii. 43, keep silence when he should not speak, Prov. x. 19, speak advisedly, and the truth only, when he speaketh, Prov. xvi. 23, hear the voice of the rod, and take with reproof and correction, Prov. xvii. 10, be loath to stumble any with whom he converseth, Col. iv. 5, yea, and will labour to gain them to God, Prov. xi. 30; for he maketh true wisdom to consist in and to evidence itself by walking circumspectly; "Not as fools, but as wise."

6. The less circumspect and exact men be in walking by the rule of God's word, the greater fools they are in God's esteem, (whatever the

world do think of them,) as being not only destitute of all the fore-mentioned evidences of true wisdom, but having also the contrary evidences of extreme folly; "See ye walk circumspectly, not as fools."

VER. 16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

The apostle doth next amplify and illustrate the former precept, by pointing out one thing wherein this accurate and wise walking doth mainly consist, which he doth therefore exhort them unto, even that they would "redeem the time;" that is, close with and make use of every opportunity and fit occasion of doing good, (for the word rendered "time" doth properly signify that nick of time which is fit and opportune for doing any thing, Gal. vi. 10,) and to use it with more than ordinary diligence, yea, and with the loss of their own pleasures, ease, and worldly profit; and so in a manner regain the time formerly lost by negligence, while they should do as much in the present time as they might have done both in that and the time formerly mispent, if they had used but ordinary diligence: even as merchants, from whom the word rendered "redeem" is taken, who use to buy their commodities while the fit time of buying lasteth, and having haply had great losses, or formerly spent their time idly or unthrifly, do dispense with their own pleasures and ease, and by their more than ordinary diligence, seek to redeem, and as it were, to buy back again the time which is lost. Which duty of redeeming time he doth enforce upon them from the evil of the present times, through the wickedness of men, and those manifold troubles in the times which were hanging over the church's head, and whereby all opportunity of doing good might in a short time be taken from them, or they from it. See Eccles. xi. 2; John ix. 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there are some times and seasons more fit and opportune than others for doing some pieces of service to God and of our duty to men; so a great part of spiritual wisdom and accurate walking doth consist in diligent and timely going about of such duties as God doth call for at that time; and they who for love to their ease, profit, pleasure, and credit, do mispend their time and neglect that good one thing which God's glory and their own salvation do call for to be gone about in the seasonable time, are but inconsiderate fools: for he sheweth that circumspect, wise walking consisteth in this, even in "redeeming the time."

2. As we are naturally prodigal and lavish in mispending of time, so it is no small part of divine wisdom to regain, as it were, mispent time by double diligence, and to buy it back again, so far as is possible, by breaking off our ease, our sleep, and weaning ourselves from our ordinary and allowed recreations at other times; for this command to "redeem the time" doth speak so much.

3. So far should we be from complying with the evils of the times, for eschewing the hatred

and gaining the favour of wicked men in the time, Hos. v. 10, 11, that the abounding of sin and wickedness in the time should make us so much the more conscientious and diligent in a profitable spending of the time, and in accurate and circumspect walking, by keeping at a great distance from any thing that is sinful in the time, Rev. iii. 4; as knowing not only that such evil times do threaten to remove all opportunity of doing good from us, or us from it, Eccles. xi. 2, but also that they carry along with them many temptations, from evil example, from straits, from persecutions, Matt. xxiv. 24, which calleth for greater circumspectness; besides, that the dishonour which God getteth from many in such times should make us honour him the more, Psa. cxix. 136, for he maketh the evils of the times a motive, not only to redeem the time, but also to walk circumspectly; "For the days are evil."

4. Times cannot be so evil but God's children may, and will improve even the evil of those times for God's honour and their own spiritual advantage: yea, and the worse that times are, in some respects they find a way to improve them the more for those ends; for Paul maketh the evil of those times a spur to incite the godly unto their duty, while he saith, "Redeeming the time, for the days are evil."

VER. 17. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

In the third place, he inferreth a conclusion from the evil of those times, containing a further amplification of the precept given ver. 15, from the rule of, or the mean enabling us to, this circumspect walking, set down both negatively and affirmatively, to wit, that seeing the time was evil and full of snares, they would not be unwise, or without understanding in the point of duty, either for the matter or manner of it; but would acquaint themselves with God's will revealed in his word, whereby they might be directed in relation to all duties, dangers, snares, temptations, and cases.

DOCTRINES.

1. The great thing to be aimed at in seeking knowledge and understanding is, not that we may only know or be able to jangle about questions, or that we may be known or esteemed of for our knowledge; but that we may practise, and walk circumspectly, according to what is made known unto us; for he would have them understanding and knowing God's will, for this end, that they may walk circumspectly in those evil days, as is clear from the illative particle "wherefore:" "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding," &c.

2. No mother-wit, natural philosophy, or carnal wisdom, is a sufficient rule to walk by in a way acceptable to God, or to convey us safely through those rocks and snares which are spread for our feet in evil times, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21, and ii. 14. It is only the knowledge revealed in his word which is able to reach this end, as containing in it a most perfect rule both of faith and manners, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; for he would have them, in order to this end, "understanding what the will of the Lord is."

3. There is that in God's will revealed in Scripture, and in no other writings else, which is sufficient to make a man completely wise unto salvation, and to drive away those dark clouds of ignorance and folly which are in the spirit of every man by nature; there being no other science or knowledge which can give a thorough discovery, either of our lost estate by nature, or of the way of our delivery from it by a Redeemer, nor yet of that obedience in its full extent wherein our thankfulness for a delivery consisteth: for he opposeth those two; "Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

4. As it ought to be a Christian man's study to know the will of God revealed in Scripture, so this is a subject which never will be perfectly known; there being always some new thing to be learned of it and from it, even by those who are greatest proficient in the knowledge of it, Psa. cxix. 96, and therefore we must be still scholars at this school; for Paul setteth forth their studying to know this subject by a word of the present time, implying it would be a continued, lasting work, while he saith, "Understanding what the will of God is."

VER. 18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

In this verse are other two of those precepts which do belong to all Christians in general: first, that they "be not drunk with wine;" where by "wine" is meant all drink which maketh drunk, set forth in one of its kinds which is most generally known. And the apostle's scope is not to forbid all use of wine; seeing it may be lawfully used, (as all other good creatures of God, 1 Tim. iv. 4,) for health, 1 Tim. v. 23; for satisfying thirst, Rom. xii. 20; as also for a Christian and sober cheering up the natural and vital spirits upon some singular occasion, John ii. 8; Prov. xxxi. 6: but he condemneth all excessive and inordinate use of wine; when more of it is taken than either natural necessity calleth for, or Christian, sober recreation and cheerfulness doth allow, and so much as our bodies and spirits are thereby overcharged in some measure, less or more, and so rendered unfit for God's service, Luke xxi. 34, even although the use of natural reason be not taken away by it, Isa. v. 22. This dissuasive from drunkenness is enforced from the sad concomitant and consequence of this sin, called here "excess." The word signifieth lavish wasting and destruction; which wasting destruction is extended elsewhere to the drunkard's means, Prov. xxiii. 21; his reputation and credit, Hab. ii. 16; his natural strength of body, Prov. xxiii. 29; his wit and judgment, Hos. iv. 11; yea, and to his soul for ever, without repentance, 1 Cor. vi. 10: so that this one word hath a comprehensive sum of all those dreadful consequences which do accompany this one sin. Secondly, in opposition to their being drunk with wine, he exhorteth them to "be filled with the Spirit" of God; to wit, by labouring to have the fruits of the Spirit in all goodness, righteousness, and truth; with joy, peace, and the comfortable sense of his presence abounding in them in a rich and copious measure.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christians, as in all other things, so in their eating and drinking, must be ruled by the word, and neither by their own appetite, Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, nor the pleasure of others, Hos. vii. 5; for he prescribeth a rule for their drinking; "Be not drunk with wine," saith he.

2. So pernicious and perverse is our natural corruption, that those things which God hath given to man for his help and good, are perverted by it for bringing about his hurt, both in soul and body, and outward estate: for "wine," which is given for health, and gladdening the heart of man, Psa. civ. 15, is abused to drunkenness, and consequently to God's dishonour and the man's own prejudice: so much is supposed while he saith, "Be not drunk with wine."

3. There is no sin more inconsistent with wise, circumspect, and conscientious spending of time, than the sin of immoderate drinking is. Experience sheweth it consumeth time, casteth open doors to all wickedness; burieth shame, which keepeth many from vice; and transformeth a man to a very beast, so that he neither knoweth nor careth what he doth; it is the mother of strifes and lust; driveth to stealing, lying, swearing, and what not? for, in opposition to the duty of walking circumspectly and redeeming the time, he mentioneth this sin of drunkenness and forbiddeth it: "And be not drunk with wine," saith he.

4. Such is the tyranny of this sin, that where it is once given way to, it carrieth a man headlong in the service of it, so that he valueth no loss, whether of credit, means, body, or soul, if he may get his beastly appetite satisfied: for Paul supposeth many were given to this sin, though therein was "excess," or destruction, and loss of all the forementioned good things following upon it, while he saith, "wherein," or, in which being drunk, or, in which drunkenness, "there is excess," or loss and destruction.

5. Though a gracious person may through infirmity slip into this sin of drunkenness, Gen. xix. 32, 33, yet a drunken course of life cannot consist with a man's having the Spirit of grace in any plentiful measure; seeing he is a Spirit of temperance, chastity, and moderation, Gal. v. 23, and not of excess: for the adversative particle "but" implieth an opposition betwixt those two, drunkenness and enjoying the presence of the Spirit of God: "Be not drunk with wine—but be filled with the Spirit."

6. We ought not to rest upon and content ourselves with a small measure of the graces of God's Spirit, but are to endeavour to be filled with them, and to have the Spirit of God dwelling richly in us, by actuating all our graces, Cant. iv. 16, and adding one degree of grace unto another, 2 Pet. iii. 18; for he commandeth them not only to have, but to "be filled with the Spirit."

7. Whatever fleshly sinful pleasure a man doth find, or imagineth to find, from any sinful course, the same, and much more, is to be had in a spiritual and divine manner in the way of grace: and particularly a copious, plentiful measure of the Spirit of grace doth work the like effects spiritually, which wine immoderately taken doth

bodily. It filleth the soul with joy and gladness, *Psa. iv. 7*; it maketh a man forget his former miseries, *Job xi. 16*; it enlargeth his heart, looseth his tongue, and maketh him eloquent in setting forth the Lord's praises, *Luke i. 67, 68*: for he recommendeth unto them to "be filled with the Spirit," as a remedy against their filling themselves with wine, and calleth the one a filling, or ebriety and drunkenness, to wit, in a spiritual sense, as well as the other in a bodily sense, because of the likeness of effects betwixt them.

VER. 19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

This last precept is illustrated, and the duty enjoined thereby recommended from two things, wherein this fill of the Spirit, and of spiritual joy flowing from it, should and will vent itself, which he proposeth also in way of precept. His scope wherein mainly is, to teach them, and us in them, how we ought to carry ourselves in our times of mirth and gladness. The first of those two things is in this verse, to wit, melodious and artificial singing of praises unto God: where he expresseth, first, the act of singing in three words, "speaking, singing, and making melody." By all which is meant an intelligible, artificial, and melodious tuning of the voice, together with an answerable orderly motion of the understanding and affections within, going along with the matter which is sung. Secondly, an inferior and subordinate end to be aimed at in singing, even our mutual edification, while he saith, "Speaking to yourselves," or, "one to another:" for it is the same word, which is *chap. iv. 32*, and *Col. iii. 16*. Thirdly, he expresseth the matter to be sung in three words, the very titles which are given to David's Psalms, and other scriptural songs: and though there be some difference among interpreters about the kind of songs, which are expressed by every one of those in particular; yet the most received and probable opinion is, that by "psalms" are meant all holy songs in general of whatsoever argument, whether they contain prayers, praises, complaints, deprecations, prophecy, history, or a purpose mixt of all those; and by "hymns" are meant special songs of praise to God; and by "songs," a certain kind of hymns, expressing the praises of God for some of his noble acts, great and wonderful beyond others. And those "songs" he calleth "spiritual," (which epithet is to be extended to the psalms and hymns also,) as being framed by the Spirit of God, containing spiritual and heavenly purpose, and requiring the assistance of God's Spirit and a spiritual frame of heart for singing them aright; and this in opposition to the obscene, filthy, and fleshly songs of carnal men and drunkards. And fourthly, he sheweth the chief thing to be made use of, and employed as an instrument in singing, to wit, not so much the lips, tongue, and outward voice, (though those be also necessary in singing, *Acts xvi. 25*.) as the heart, which then is made use of in singing, when our heart goeth along with the voice, so, as we understand, *1 Cor. xiv. 15*, and be intent upon the

purpose, *Psa. lvi. 7*, and our affections be stirred and suitably affected with it, *Psa. xcvi. 4*. And lastly, he sheweth the great end to which all our songs ought to be directed, even "to the Lord;" the glorifying, and praising of him, being not only the remote scope of singing, as it is of all other ordinances, and ought to be of all our actions, *1 Cor. x. 31*, but its proper and immediate scope; so that the heart in singing ought to be actually taken up with the thoughts of praise to God, arising from the consideration of the purpose which we sing. Besides what I have already observed upon a parallel place, *Col. iii. 16*, learn hence,

1. The duty of singing psalms and spiritual songs is not restricted and limited to only one in the congregation, or to some certain orders of men, the rest being silent, but is enjoined to all the Lord's people, even all the members of the church: for Paul maketh the command to sing, of equal extent with that other of being filled with the Spirit, *ver. 18*, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns," &c. saith he.

2. That we may go about this worship of singing praises to God acceptably, it is necessary that we be filled with the Spirit and have a rich and copious measure of his presence and assistance, though not to compose new songs: for he pointeth at scriptural songs, as the most fitting purpose to be sung, under the titles of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs;" yet that we may be enabled to choose the fittest songs for the present occasion, and sing them with such a spiritual, elevated frame of heart, as such a divine and heavenly piece of worship requireth; for he saith, "be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

3. As even the children of God, when they have gotten a full draught of joy, peace, and other sweet fruits of the Spirit of God, are not above the hazard of venting their joy, by falling out in fits of carnal lightness; so there is nothing, which the child of God ought more to advert unto, than how to carry aright when his cup is full according to his heart's wish: and in order hereto, would express his joy in the praises of God; lest by doing otherwise, and giving way to lightness of carriage or expressions, in that case he provoke the Spirit of God to withdraw from him, *Eph. iv. 30*; for therefore doth he command them being filled with the Spirit to vent their joy, by "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

4. As the Lord hath provided songs and psalms to be sung by us of diverse arguments, containing purpose suitable for every condition we can readily fall under; so we ought to make such use of that variety, as to make choice of those psalms for our present singing, which are most fit for the present occasion: for, as is said, the titles here given do relate to the several purposes which are set forth in spiritual songs; all of which are to be sung, as God by his present dealing with his church, or ourselves, shall require; "Speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

5. In singing of psalms to God, there must be an inward harmony, and musical melody in the

soul and heart, as well as in the tongue: yea, the chief melody which soundeth most sweetly unto God, is that of the soul and heart; and therefore the outward delighting of the ears is to be taken no further notice of, than it serveth to make the purpose we sing work the more effectually upon the heart: for he saith, "singing and making melody in the heart:" what this melody of the heart is, was shown in the exposition.

VER. 20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Here is the second thing, wherein our being filled with the Spirit should and will vent itself, even in giving of thanks, or in a sensible acknowledgment of favours received, and in expressing our sense of them, whether by word or work to the praise of the bestower. Which duty is amplified, 1. from the time when it ought to be discharged, "always," and at all times: not as if we were to be always, and without intermission, in the actual exercise of this duty of formal and direct thanksgiving; (seeing there are other necessary duties which sometimes must divert us from it;) but because our whole life ought to be according to the will of God, and consequently a real expression of our thankfulness to him; and because we are not to omit any occasion when it offereth, of formal and direct thanksgiving to God expressed in words, flowing from the inward sense and feeling of our hearts, as they are said to do a thing always, who do it upon all due occasions; see 2 Sam. ix. 13. Secondly, from the matter, for which we are to give thanks "for all things," whether spiritual or temporal, prosperous or adverse; for God maketh all things, even those which are adverse, work together for the good of such as love him, Rom. viii. 28; yea, he punisheth less than our iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13, and maketh saddest corrections to afford most necessary and profitable instructions, Psa. xciv. 12, and cxix. 71, so that there is ground of thanksgiving even for those. Thirdly, from the party to whom this duty is to be discharged, "unto God and the Father;" see upon Col. iii. ver. 17, Doct. 3. And, fourthly, from the party through whom "Jesus Christ," by the virtue of whose merit and satisfaction (which are his name whereby he is known) we are not only enabled to go about our duty, Phil. iv. 13, but also all our spiritual performances, whether of prayer or thanksgiving, are acceptable and well-pleasing unto God, Eph. i. 6.

DOCTRINES.

1. The more a man doth find his heart disposed to give thanks to God at all times, and for all things, even for those things wherein divine dispensation goeth cross to his own affections, he may the more certainly conclude that he hath the saving work of God's Spirit in him in a copious measure; and the more apt we are to mistake, repine, and murmur at God's dealing, and so to waste our spirits in heartless complaints, there is the less evidence of a gracious work of God's Spirit in us, at least in any great measure: for he maketh "giving of thanks always for

all things," an effect of being "filled with the Spirit."

2. So firm, so calm and composed is that man's state and inward frame of heart, who hath his soul replenished with a rich measure of the saving work of God's Spirit, that nothing can fall out so cross unto him, but, he may see the hand of God working for good to him in it, and consequently be kept in perfect peace, and a joyful frame of heart, expressing itself in giving of thanks to God, notwithstanding of it, yea and for it: for he showeth the man filled with the Spirit may attain to this fixed frame of heart, even to be "giving thanks always for all things unto God."

3. Spiritual exercises, especially that of giving thanks, are such, that, being rightly gone about, frequency in them doth not beget satiety and loathing, but rather a greater delight to continue in them; so that the more we are acquainted with them, the more we love them: for otherwise this command of "giving thanks always," should never receive obedience.

4. So steadable and useful is a cheery and thankful frame of heart unto a Christian, that it bringeth meat out of the eater, encouragement from matter of discouragement, and taketh occasion to lift itself up in the praises of God, even from these things which are matter of down-casting and heartless drooping unto others: for a thankful heart will "give thanks always and for all things," even for adverse and cross dispensations.

5. Though we are bound to give thanks unto men for favours received, as unto instruments of God's good providence towards us, Col. iii. 15; yet, religious thanksgiving is only due unto God, as implying an eyeing of him to whom we give thanks, as the supreme fountain and author of the favour received, having sufficiency in himself, and receiving nothing from any other, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, and implying also a religious subjection of the whole man, both in soul and body, unto his benefactor, in evidence of a thankful heart, 1 Cor. vi. 20; for the apostle, speaking of this religious thanksgiving, will have it ascribed to God only; "Giving thanks unto God and the Father."

6. That we may employ Jesus Christ aright, whether for furniture and through-bearing in duty, or for acceptance of our performances by God, it is most conducing and necessary that we so take him up, as he is made known by the word in his person, nature and offices, and accordingly close with him by faith, as ours, whereby our faith being acted in him with relation to our state and persons, upon undoubted grounds, we may find more easy work to act faith in him for furniture to such a particular duty, or for acceptance to it when it is performed: for Paul seemeth to imply so much, while, teaching them to act faith in Christ for through-bearing and acceptance in this duty of thanksgiving, he doth hold him forth not only under his titles of "Lord" and "Jesus" and "Christ," which do imply his distinct natures, with the unity of his person, and his threefold office, to which he was anointed, (see upon chap. i. ver. 17, Doct. 6,) but also maketh mention of his "name," which expresseth whatever other thing is revealed of him, and

whereby especially he is made known; and withal appropriateth Christ unto himself, teaching them to do the like upon grounds of knowledge of what he is, while he saith, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

VER. 21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

The apostle (having from chap. iv. ver. 1, exhorted unto such duties as belong to all Christians in general, of whatsoever rank or station,) doth now, in the second part of this chapter, exhort to those duties which belong to Christians, as they are members of families. And, first, in this verse to make way from the former purpose to that which followeth, he doth permit a general exhortation unto all, whether superiors or inferiors, to be mutually "subject one to another;" where submission or subjection is taken not strictly for that which is the root of obedience in inferiors towards superiors, as ver. 22, but generally for that service of love which every one oweth to another for their mutual good and advantage in their several stations. (See upon Gal. v. ver. 13.) And it is called submission to our neighbour: because it is not sufficient that we simply do the commanded duty unto him, except our so doing flow from a principle of love to him, and that we actually intend therein his good and advantage; and because it must be done with condescendency of spirit and stooping, seeing our proud and lofty spirits do look upon every duty towards our neighbour as below them. And he addeth "in the fear of God:" which containeth, first, a motive to the duty, this mutual submission and stooping unto all those duties, which we owe one to another, being an evidence of a man's fearing God, Gen. xlii. 18; and, secondly, the right fountain from whence this submission should flow, for then do we our duty towards others acceptably, and as we ought, when our so doing floweth from the fear and awe of God, Col. iii. 22; and, thirdly, the rule and measure of this submission, there being none bound to submit himself to please his neighbour further than is consisting with that subjection and obedience which he oweth unto God, Acts v. 29.

DOCTRINES.

1. We are not, under pretence of going about the duties of God's immediate worship, to neglect those other duties of our particular callings, and which we owe to man in our several stations; God alloweth time for both, we are to take time for both; and conscientious regard of the one and of the other are most consistent; for the apostle enjoineth both the former and latter sort of duties, as it were with one breath, which is clear from the grammatical construction of the words; "Giving thanks always—submitting yourselves one to another."

2. Yea, secondly, the conscientious discharging of those duties which we owe to our neighbour in our several stations, in a way acceptable to God, doth call for and argue a copious measure of the saving work of God's Spirit in the heart, no less than those other duties of God's worship and ser-

vice: for this verse dependeth upon, and is constructed with ver. 18, "Be filled with the Spirit—submitting yourselves."

3. There are none living, whom God alloweth to live only to themselves; but all are bound to lay out themselves in their respective employments for the good and behoof of others; even superiors for the good of inferiors; for this command is given to all without exception: "Submitting yourselves one to another."

4. As God hath tied us not to live to ourselves only, but also to others, whose good we are to aim at in our place and station; so, for a recompense, and that there may be a kind of equality, he hath tied those others to live also unto us, and one way or other to be forthcoming for our good and advantage; for the command and obligation founded upon it, is reciprocal: "Submitting yourselves one to another."

5. Where the fear of God is rooted in the heart, it will make a man conscientiously careful and tender of his duty towards man, so that he will not only do his duty, but also do it from a right principle and motive, and so do as he will not overdo, by displeasing God, while he goeth about to please men: for he holdeth forth the fear of God, as the fountain, motive, and rule of that submission which is here enjoined: "Submitting one to another in the fear of God."

VER. 22. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

The apostle cometh now to press those particular duties which are incumbent to every member of a complete family. And being to begin with the duties of husbands and wives, he doth in the first place exhort wives to their duty, to wit, that part of it which is peculiar to them, passing by those other duties which are common to them with their husbands, as love, Tit. ii. 4, Col. iii. 19, communion of body and goods, 1 Cor. vii. 4, dwelling together, 1 Pet. iii. 7, bearing mutually with one another's infirmities, Gal. vi. 2. These duties, then, peculiar to the wives, are here briefly summed up in this one word of "submission," properly and strictly so called; and it supposeth somewhat in the wife, to wit, a reverend esteem of her husband, as the root of this submission, spoken of, ver. 33, to be evidenced in her respective speaking to him and of him, 1 Pet. iii. 6, and it expreseth somewhat, to wit, the obedience of the wife to her husband in things lawful, flowing from reverence and submission of mind, 1 Pet. iii. 5, 6. It implieth also somewhat as consequential to that state of subjection wherein the wife is placed, even the exercise of several virtues, as that she be a keeper at home, Tit. ii. 5, an active promoter of her husband's and her own affairs, especially within doors, Prov. xxxi. 13, &c., that she evidence shamefacedness, sobriety, and submission in her moderate speech, in her grave and affable deportment, and in rendering herself teachable in those things wherein she shall be instructed by her husband, 1 Tim. ii. 9—12. Now, this submission of the wives, is explained, first, from the party to whom they owe it, to wit, their own husbands, even though they should come short

of others in knowledge, wisdom, and every other thing which doth deserve it, 1 Sam. xxv. 17. And, secondly, from the manner, motive, and rule of their submissive obedience, while he saith, "as unto the Lord," to wit, Christ expressly spoken of, ver. 23; for, first, it must not be constrained and feigned, but willing and sincere, resembling so far at least that subjection which they owe to the Lord Christ: for though the comparative particle "as" doth not hold forth an equality in all things; yet it pointeth at a similitude and likeness in some things. Secondly, it must not flow from a natural principle only of law, custom, or desire of preventing domestic broils, but from conscience of duty to the Lord Christ, and from respect to his ordinance, who hath so appointed. And, thirdly, it must be only in things lawful, and no ways contrary to that submissive obedience which they owe to him.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the right ordering of families doth conduce much to the advancing of religion and policy, (combination in families being the foundation of all other societies,) so the good and orderly conversation of husband and wife, is of great concernment for advancing piety and godliness among all the other members of the family: for as the apostle presseth much those duties which belong to Christians, as they are members of families, so he doth begin with the duties of husband and wife: "Wives, submit yourselves."

2. When we are to deal with persons of several states and conditions, and to inform and press upon them their respective duties, we are to begin with the inferiors, rather than the superiors; because their duty, through the subjection which is in it, is more difficile, and being made conscience of is a strong motive unto the superior to go about his duty in like manner: for therefore the apostle, in pressing duties upon those three pairs, which are in every complete family, doth always begin with the inferior first, as here, "Wives, submit yourselves."

3. The great and main duty which a wife, as a wife, ought to learn, and so learn as to practise it, is to be subject to her own husband, so that whatever wives be otherwise for parts, for birth, for beauty, for thrift, for breeding, if this be in-lacking [wanting], they want their chief ornament, are dishonourable to God, and a disgrace to their husbands; for Paul doth hold it forth as their great lesson, and the sum of all their duty: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands."

4. There is no wife, whatever be her birth, parts, or any other privileges, who is exempted from this tie of subjection to her own husband. The law of nature, God's ordinance, and her own voluntary covenant, do bind her to it; for he speaketh indefinitely to all wives: "submit yourselves."

5. There is not any husband, to whom this honour of submission from his own wife is not due; no personal infirmity, frowardness of nature, no, nor error in the point of religion, doth deprive him of it, 1 Cor. vii. 13, for he speaketh

indefinitely also of husbands: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands."

6. A wife can never discharge her duty in any measure of conscientious tenderness towards her husband, except she have a high esteem of the Lord Christ, and be in the first place subject unto him; that so from love to him she may subject herself to her husband, not going without those bounds of submission which are consistent with her love to Christ; for while he biddeth, "submit yourselves unto their own husbands, as unto Christ," he supposeth they had submitted to Christ already, and speaketh to them as such.

VER. 23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

The apostle doth next enforce this duty of submissive obedience upon wives, from the ordinance of God, who hath made the husband to be a head to his wife; which similitude of a head, taken from a natural or politic body, implieth, first, the husband's eminency by reason of his sex, the woman being the weaker vessel, 1 Pet. iii. 7, and made for the man, to wit, an helper to him, Gen. ii. 18, and the man not for the wife, 1 Cor. xi. 9, as the head is more eminent than the body. Secondly, it implieth the husband's power and authority of government over his wife, as the head hath power over the body to rule and direct it; in which respect the man is called the image of God in a sense peculiar to himself, which agreeth not to the woman, 1 Cor. xi. 7. And it implieth, thirdly, that ordinary men are, at least should be, endued with a greater measure of knowledge, prudence, and other parts, which they are to employ for the behoof of their wives, 1 Cor. xiv. 35; even as the head is the seat of wisdom, knowledge, nerves, and senses, sending down influence for sense and motion to all the members, upon all which grounds, women ought in reason to be subject to their husbands. Which argument he doth illustrate and enforce from the similitude of Christ's headship over the church, (whereof see chap. i. ver. 22,) so that wives ought to submit themselves, because God will have some resemblance of Christ's authority over the church held forth in the husband's authority over the wife. I say, some resemblance only: for the comparative particle "as" holdeth forth not an equality, but a similitude and likeness, and in some things only, betwixt Christ's headship over the church, and the husband's over the wife, even in those things which I presently show are implied in the husband's headship, which are some shadows only of that eminency, power, and fullness of grace and perfections which are in our head Christ. But besides those the apostle doth here express one thing, wherein this resemblance doth also hold, to wit, that Christ, as head, is the "Saviour of the body," thereby implying, that as Christ's dominion over the church, his body, doth tend to, and is exercised in procuring and bringing about, the church's good and salvation; so the husband's authority and eminency are given him for the like end, even to procure the good and safety of his wife, in defending her

from injuries, 1 Sam. xxx. 18, providing for her, 1 Tim. v. 8, directing her in things necessary, &c., 1 Cor. xiv. 35, and therefore the wife, upon this consideration also, ought to subject herself; seeing the husband's power and authority over her are given for her good. Besides those doctrines, which the text thus explained doth expressly hold forth, we may gather these consequences from it:

1. It is not sufficient that wives do subject themselves to their husbands from respect to their own peace, ease, credit, or to any thing of that sort; but their subjection ought to flow from the conscience of and respect to that state and dignity wherein God hath placed their husbands above them, so that their personal infirmities do not prevail so much to make them despise them, as the dignity of their state to beget respect, reverence, and obedience towards them: for Paul enforceeth such a subjection, as floweth from this ground, while he saith, "for the husband is the head of the wife."

2. There is no society, though never so strictly tied together with strongest bonds, which can comfortably subsist, and keep together for any space of time, except there be different degrees of superiors and inferiors, some to govern, and others to obey in the Lord, among them: for the wise Lord did see it necessary so to ordain, even in conjugal society of husband and wife, who are so strictly tied, that both are but one flesh, (see ver. 31,) and yet the husband is made "the head of the wife."

3. Christians ought to be of such a heavenly frame of spirit, as to take occasion from things civil or natural, which do occur in their ordinary employments, to ascend to heavenly contemplations of things spiritual, which have some resemblance to these other things, which are among their hands: for the apostle teacheth so much, while he leadeth husband and wife from the consideration of the union, order and duties of married parties, to contemplate that sweet union and order which is betwixt Christ and his church, both here and in the following verses; "Even as Christ is the head of the church," saith he.

4. Husbands, and consequently other superiors, have a special piece of the image of Christ put upon them, in respect of their power and authority over their inferiors given them of God; whereby both inferiors may be afraid to vilify and condemn their authority, lest they be therein found defacers of the image of God, and they themselves also may be taught to resemble Christ, whose image they bear, in employing their state and dignity so as they walk answerably to it, if they would have that submission and respect from inferiors which is due unto it: for Paul maketh that eminency and authority, which husbands have over their wives, a shadow and resemblance of Christ's power over his church; "even as Christ is the head of the church."

5. As the members of Christ's body are by nature lost and gone, even dead in sin and children of wrath, Eph. ii. 1-3; so there was no way for their recovery, but by Jesus Christ his becoming man, and suffering death, and uniting himself, being now risen from death, unto them

as their head, that so he may bestow the influences of spiritual life, with a right to heaven, upon them here, and at last take them to himself in glory hereafter: for he sheweth that Christ is become the church's head, that he might be a Saviour of his lost body.

6. The dominion and power which husbands have over their wives, is not tyrannical, rigid, or sovereign, but loving, gentle, warm, and amiable, and such as the wife may look upon as a merey to herself, as well as a dignity unto her husband; for it is compared here unto that sweet and natural power which the head exerciseth over the body, and Christ over his church, who maketh his people willing in the day of his power; and it ought to be employed wholly for the good and safety of his wife, as Christ is the Saviour of the body.

VER. 24. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ; so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

The apostle, secondly, repeateth the exhortation, as a conclusion from the former argument, that wives should subject themselves unto their own husbands; and addeth two things, first, the manner of this subjection, to wit, such as it may resemble the subjection of the church unto Christ: which is to be understood, not in all things, (for wives are not to subject their souls and consciences to their husbands, as believers do to Christ, trusting in him for life and salvation,) but in some things only, to wit, so as they may subject themselves willingly, cheerfully, lovingly, chastely, and dutifully unto their husbands: for so doth the church subject herself unto Christ. He addeth, secondly, the extent of this subjection and obedience, even to all things: which is not to be understood of all things absolutely, and without exception, Acts v. 29, but all things lawful, godly, honest, and which are not forbidden in the word of God, even though they cross the humour of the wives, and argue little discretion in the husband who commandeth them, Numb. v. 14, 15, &c.; for nothing is excepted here but what is contrary to that subjection which is due to him who hath commanded this subjection of wives to their husbands, as Paul commenteth upon an expression like to this, 1 Cor. xv. 27.

DOCTRINES.

1. As subjection in wives unto their husbands, is a most necessary duty; so considering the inbred pride, arrogance, and self-willedness, which is in all the sons and daughters of Adam by nature, it is a work of no small difficulty to get wives persuaded to give that hearty, cheerful, loving, and dutiful respect and obedience unto their husbands, which both the law of nature, and the written word of God, do require from them: for to what purpose else doth he reiterate this exhortation, and enforce it by so strong and convincing arguments? "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be unto their own husbands."

2. Though there be much unmodified corrup-

tion in the church of true believers, and a law in their members rebelling against the law of their mind, Rom. vii. 23, yet God doth look upon them as true and loyal subjects to Christ, in so far as with the spirit and better part (according to which God doth reckon with them) they serve the law of God, Rom. vii. 25, and do groan after and long for the time when they shall be fully freed from the body of death, and thoroughly subjected unto the will of God, Phil. i. 23: for while he saith, "as the church is subject unto Christ," it is supposed that the church is subject unto him, and looked upon by God as such.

3. The servants of Christ, in pressing duties, ought mainly to guard against that extremity, which people naturally are most prone to fall into; especially seeing all the guards which can be used, will have sufficient work to keep the heart from breaking over upon that hand: for though there be some things excepted from coming under that obedience, which wives do owe to their husbands, as was cleared in the exposition; yet because wives are more inclined to multiply exceptions in this purpose, than to diminish them, therefore he extendeth this obedience expressly to all things, leaving them only to gather from the circumstances of the text, and other places of Scripture, those few things which are excepted; that thereby he may with one word cut off all unscriptural exceptions, limitations, and restrictions, which imperious, aspiring spirits, impatient of the yoke, are ready to bound and straiten this submission and obedience by; "Let them be subject in every thing," saith he.

VER. 25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

The apostle doth now exhort husbands to their duty: which he first proposeth summarily under the name of love to their wives, whereby the heart and inmost affections of the husband ought to be so inclined and disposed towards his wife, as that not only he do wish her good, but also endeavour unto his utmost to bring it about: which is not to be so understood, as if the wife were not bound to love her husband also, Tit. ii. 4, but he presseth love upon the husband in particular, because he is most ready to fail in this duty of love, and to abuse that superiority which God hath given him over his wife, by proving rigorous and bitter against her, Col. iii. 19. Now this love enjoined to husbands, is not that common Christian love which is extended unto all Christians of both sexes, as unto brethren and sisters in Christ, John xiii. 34, but a special and conjugal love, which ought to be extended unto none, but unto a man's own wife: and it includeth cohabitation with his wife, and contentation with her love only, Prov. v. 18, 19, a patient bearing with her infirmities and frailties, 1 Pet. iii. 7, with a fatherly care to defend her, 1 Sam. xxx. 5, &c., to provide for her in all things, according to his power; which either her necessity or dignity of her rank doth require, 1 Tim. v. 8, lovingly to govern, direct and in-

struct her, 1 Cor. xiv. 35, yea, and to cherish her, ver. 29. Next, he enforceth this duty by two arguments; the first whereof is proposed in this verse, to wit, Christ's example, who loved his church, and from love gave himself for it. (See upon ver. 2.) Which example of Christ's love doth not only enforce the duty as an argument, but also point forth the right manner of the duty, as a pattern: in so far as the husband's love ought to resemble Christ's, to wit, in the chastity of his love, who loveth none to his church, John xvii. 9; the sincerity of his love, who loveth the church, not for his, but for her advantage, Prov. viii. 30, with Gal. ii. 20; not for what is hers, but for herself, Hos. xiv. 4; and not in words only, but in deeds also, testifying his love by the effects, John xv. 13; and in the constancy of his love, who loveth whom he loveth unto the end, John xiii. 1, even notwithstanding of their infirmities, Psal. lxxxix. 30, 33: such ought the husband's love to be.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though husbands are not to suffer their wives to exercise dominion and authority over them, that being contrary to the ordinance of God, and the good both of husband and wife, ver. 22, 23; yet seeing the nature of men, and of husbands in particular with relation to their wives, are sufficiently bent of their own accord to exercise any power and authority they have, and rather to exceed their due than to keep within it; therefore neither ought they themselves so much to mind their power, neither is it so necessary for them to be minded thereof by others, as to be careful how to use their power and authority well, and as it ought: for therefore the apostle, though he commanded the wives to submit; yet he doth not expressly bid the husbands rule over their wives, but, "husbands love your wives," as thinking it more fit to let them understand how to use their power well, than to stir them up to the exercise of it.

2. The great and main duty which a husband as a husband ought to learn, and so learn as to practise it, is love to his wife; and so to love her, as to make love kyth [appear] in all his deportment towards her, and in all those other duties which he oweth to her; this being that one thing in the husband, which sweeteneth the yoke of subjection laid upon the wife, giveth her courage under it, and maketh her willingly submit unto it, when it receiveth such a sweet return from her husband: for Paul doth hold forth this as the husband's great lesson, and the sum of all his other duty; "Husbands, love your wives."

3. There is no husband, whatever he be for birth, parts, authority, or power, who is not tied to love his wife, and to evidence his love to her in all those duties mentioned in opening up the text: for he speaketh indefinitely unto all; "Husbands, love your wives."

4. Neither is there any wife, to whom all those duties, flowing from the fountain of love, are not due by her husband. No meanness of birth, Est. ii. 17, no personal infirmity, 1 Sam. i. 5, adultery being excepted, Matt. xix. 9, nor forwardness of nature, John xix. 17, do prejudice

her of them; for he speaketh indefinitely also of the wives; "Husbands, love your wives."

5. Though it concerneth husbands and wives and others also, who are tied together by mutual relations, as masters and servants, parents and children, to take some sort of inspection one of another, lest any of their relations come short of their duty, 2 Kings v. 13; yet it concerneth every one most, to make conscience of his own duty, not only to God, but also to his relations, and that, as for other reasons, so for this,—there can be no greater encouragement to stir up his relations to make conscience of their duty to him; for he commandeth every one to mind their own duty most, the wives "to submit themselves," the husbands "to love their wives," and so in the rest.

6. As Jesus Christ hath deigned himself to undergo the relation of a husband to his church, so this, and those other relations taken on by him are not empty titles; he doth the duties which all such relations do bind to, even to the utmost. And particularly, he is such a husband, that for love to his church, and all other duties flowing from love, he is exemplary unto all other husbands; "seeing greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John xiv. 13; for as Paul implieth here, and in the verses following, that Christ is the church's husband; so he holdeth forth his love as a pattern to be imitated by all; "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church."

7. The love which a husband carrieth to his wife, ought to be founded, not upon beauty, riches, health, or any such thing only which is subject unto decay, but also and principally upon that unchangeable foundation of the love of Christ unto his church, which is here held forth, not only as a pattern, but as an argument also, and the reason wherefore husbands ought to love their wives, even as "Christ also loved the church."

8. As those whom Christ doth love with a special love, are only his, that is, real believers, who are subject to him, ver. 24; so Jesus Christ did give himself to death, not for all and every one, John xvii. 9, but only for his church, which is his all, and consisteth of some of all nations, and of all ranks in the world, in which respect only Christ is said to have died for all, 1 Tim. ii. 6, for Paul astrieth both his love and his death to the church; "As Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." See some further doctrines gathered from the like words, ver. 2.

VER. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word,

He insisteth upon this excellent pattern of love, by showing two ends why Christ from love did give himself for his church. The first whereof is attained in the present life, and expressed in this verse, to wit, that he "might sanctify" those for whom he gave himself. Which sanctifying work, as it is here taken, doth comprehend that whole complex business of translating the elect from the state of sin and death, to the state of

grace and life, even our regeneration, justification, and the gracious change of our dispositions, or sanctification strictly so called, as John xvii. 17; which he calleth a cleansing of us, expressing the manner how Christ doth sanctify his church, even by doing away the guilt of sin, or obligation to wrath because of sin, in justification, Rom. viii. 1; and the filth, power, and activity of sin, in the renovation of our natures after his own image, Rom. vi. 14: which cleansing work is here described from the external means and instruments by which Christ doth cleanse his church, and make application of the virtue and power of his death and sufferings, in order to that end. And those are, first, the sacrament of baptism, called "the washing of water," because of the external rite and element used in that sacrament; and cleansing is ascribed to this washing, not as if there were any virtue bestowed upon the water by God, whereby grace is conferred and really wrought, 1 Pet. iii. 21, but because, though it be God alone who wholly and effectually doth sanctify and cleanse us, 1 Cor. iii. 7, yet this sacrament, as also the other, are made use of by him, not only to represent Christ, and those gracious saving works of his, 1 Cor. x. 16, but also to confirm the grant of them to us, if we believe, Rom. iv. 11; yea, and to exhibit a greater measure of those saving graces unto us upon our right using of them, 1 Cor. xi. 24, therefore is it, that the thing signified is ascribed unto the sign and seal. Now, the apostle doth mention baptism only, and not the Lord's supper, either because there is the same reason for both, and therefore it was sufficient to express the one; or because baptism is the first and leading sacrament, and sealeth up our regeneration and new birth in a peculiar manner, Tit. iii. 5; and therefore it is most appositely mentioned here, where he speaketh of God's work in bringing sinners out of nature unto the state of grace. The second mean and instrument which God maketh use of, is the word, to wit, the covenant of grace revealed in the gospel, and preached by sent ministers, Rom. x. 15, which the Lord doth bless for conveying grace to graceless sinners, and so for sanctifying and cleansing them, not by any virtue in the sound, syllables, or sentences of this word, but by the effectual working of his own Spirit, Acts xvi. 14, whereby he doth accompany his word, when and where he pleaseth, John iii. 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. The love which a husband carrieth unto his wife, ought to make itself evident, not only in these things which tend to her well-being in things temporal, but also and chiefly in his sincere endeavours to bring about her spiritual and eternal good, by labouring to instruct her in the saving knowledge of God in Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 7, lovingly to admonish her for her faults, Joh. ii. 10, and to pray with her and for her, 1 Pet. iii. 7, for the example of Christ's love to his church which he is to imitate, doth teach so much, seeing he from love "gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse her."

2. As God's image was lost and forfeited by Adam's fall unto all his posterity, so there was

not any possible way for our recovering of it, except a price, and no less price than the blood of Christ, had been first paid to provoked justice for it: for Christ behaved to give himself, and thereby purchase sanctification for us, that so "he might sanctify and cleanse the church."

3. Our dying Lord had an actual intention in due time to sanctify, and accordingly doth regenerate, justify, and sanctify, yea, and bring unto glory, all those for whom he died, and gave himself a sacrifice and offering unto God: for his intentions cannot be frustrated, but he must see the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 11. Now, that he intended to sanctify all such, is clear; "For he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it."

4. As all those for whom Christ our Lord did from love give himself, and whom by his death he intended to sanctify, were in themselves polluted and unclean, lying in their blood, defiled both with the guilt of sin already committed, and with the filthy vileness of sin yet indwelling, Eph. ii. 1—3; so such was the fervency of love in Christ to lost sinners, and such was the virtue of his merit, that no uncleanness of this kind did make him loathe them, or despair of getting them made clean; "For that he gave himself for the church to cleanse it," supposeth that they were unclean, and yet he loveth them, and from love setteth about to cleanse them.

5. The stain and blot of sin, both in its filth and guilt, hath so much sunk down in and polluted the whole man in soul and body, that no liquor under heaven can wash it out, or cleanse the soul from it, but only the washing, cleansing virtue of Christ's most precious blood; "For he gave himself for the church, that he might cleanse it."

6. This precious liquor of Christ's blood did not cleanse and sanctify all those for whom he gave himself, so soon as it was shed upon the cross; no, there neither was nor can be any cleansing of any by the blood of Christ, until it be effectually applied unto the filthy soul; for he mentioneth the word and sacraments, as the means whereby Christ applyeth the virtue of his death, and ascribeth therefore this effect of cleansing unto them; "He gave himself, that he might cleanse it, by the washing of water, by the word."

7. As this work and duty of applying the cleansing virtue of Christ's death by a lively faith, Acts xv. 9, is of all the other most difficult; so the goodness of God hath provided many means, by the help whereof we may be carried on towards it, the chief whereof are the word preached, and the sacraments administrated, the former containing the charter, or grant of Christ, and of all his benefits from God unto every one who will receive him, John iii. 16; the latter being the great seal of heaven annexed to this grant, Rom. iv. 11, that thereby we may be more and more confirmed in the faith of it; for his providing these means, doth point at both the difficulty of applying Christ, and his care to have us brought up to it; "That he might cleanse it, by the washing of water, and by the word."

8. The Spirit of God prescribeth means unto himself, by which he bringeth about the work of

grace in graceless sinners, not to tie himself absolutely, and in all cases to such means, but that we may be tied to depend on him in the use of them, his ordinary way being to convey grace by these: for though he may sanctify some from the womb, before they hear the word, or receive any sacrament, Jer. i. 5; yet he holdeth these forth as the ordinary means by which he cleanseth, even "the washing of water by the word."

VER. 27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Here is the second end of Christ's giving himself for his church, as also of his sanctifying it; which end is not attained until the life to come: for (besides that he hath spoken of the church's state of grace, ver. 26) the words here used are so comprehensive and large, that they cannot be well understood to have their full accomplishment, until believers be brought by Christ unto that full perfection in grace which shall be attained in glory. Which state of perfection is here set forth, by that most perfect union and conjunction which the church shall have with Christ, being presented to him as the bride to the bridegroom, for the thorough accomplishing of the marriage; by virtue of which most perfect union, the church shall be "glorious," that is, perfectly holy and happy, as he after explaineth, showing all evil, whether of sin or misery, shall be removed, even the least spot of sin or wrinkle through old age or misery not excepted; and that all contrary good shall be bestowed, both perfect holiness and happiness, in such a measure that the most rigid critic, or Momus himself, shall not find any inlack or defect in either, as the word rendered "without blemish," will bear.

DOCTRINES.

1. All those who are justified and sanctified here, and none but they, shall be glorified hereafter: for Christ must see the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 11, which is not only to sanctify those for whom he gave himself, ver. 26, but also to glorify them, and to bring them to glory by the way of holiness; "That he might present it to himself a glorious church."

2. Christ hath purchased by his death, not only sanctification to his church, but also heaven itself, and therefore our glory in heaven is not merited by our holiness, but being purchased by Christ, is freely gifted to us, Rom. vi. 23. "He gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church," saith he.

3. Though believers, even while they are here, be brought near to God in Christ by faith, Eph. ii. 13, and have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 3; yet all that fellowship and nearness is but a distance and kind of estrangement, being compared with that most perfect presence and intimate fellowship, which shall be enjoyed hereafter; the former being but mediate, through the glass of ordinances, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, frequently interrupted, Psal. xxx. 7, and no ways full, 1 Cor. xiii. 12;

but the latter shall be immediate, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, constant, 1 Thess. iv. 17, and so full, that they who enjoy the meanest degree, shall find no lack, Psa. xvii. 15; for he speaketh of Christ's presenting his church to himself in glory at the great day, as if there were nothing but uncouthness and distance betwixt him and the church until then; "That he might present it to himself a glorious church," saith he.

4. Though every believing soul is, when the Father draweth it to Christ, contracted and handfasted with him, Hos. ii. 19, 20; yet, for good and wise reasons, it pleaseth the Lord Christ to delay the taking of us home to himself, and the accomplishment and consummation of the begun marriage, until all the elect, being effectually called, shall be presented to him at once; and so this spiritual marriage shall be fully accomplished betwixt Jesus Christ and the bride, the Lamb's wife, Rev. xix. 7; even as in earthly marriages, there is first a contract, or espousals, and then for just and honest reasons, some space of time ought to intervene betwixt that and the full accomplishment of the marriage, Deut. xx. 7, Matt. i. 18: for Paul sheweth that then, at the great day, the whole church of real believers shall be presented to Christ, as the bride is to the bridegroom, for the solemn consummation of the marriage; "That he might present it to himself a glorious church."

5. As believing souls, even after their being contracted with Christ by faith, and after they are renewed and cleansed in part, do not get all their filthy garments put off, there being a body of sin and death which cleaveth unto the best; so at the final solemnization of the marriage in the great day, the church of believers, the bride, and Lamb's wife, shall be clad in garments of glory, being fully freed from the smallest remnant of sin and misery, and made wholly glorious both in soul, Matt. xxii. 30, and body, Phil. iii. 21; for he saith, "That he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle," &c.

6. Those garments of glory, and needle work, wherewith the church, the Lamb's wife, shall be arrayed in the marriage-day, are dearly purchased, and freely bestowed upon her by Christ her bridegroom and head: for Paul saith, "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle," &c.

7. This perfect glorious state, wherein the church shall be for ever with Christ her Lord, her head, her husband, is such as none can positively declare what it is, yea, neither can the heart of man comprehend it; and all the knowledge which can be here in our state of imperfection attained of it, is not so much positive, or a knowing what it is, as negative, or a knowing what it is not, by removing all those things from it, which imply the least degree of sin and misery; for therefore doth Paul set it out here by four negatives, "Not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and without blemish," and by one affirmative only, "that it should be holy."

VER. 28. So ought men to love their wives, as

their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.

Followeth the second argument to enforce this duty of love upon husbands towards their wives, taken from the near conjunction betwixt husband and wife, which he doth propound in this verse, by showing that the wife is the husband's body, in so far, as by the law of marriage (which shall be explained, ver. 30,) they two become one flesh; so that in loving her, he doth love himself, to wit, not so much because his so doing tendeth to his own good and peace, (though that be also truth, Prov. v. 17—19,) as that she is his own body, a piece of himself, yea and his whole self, or a second self, they two being one flesh; and therefore he ought to love her, yea, and to love her with the same sincerity and ardency of affection, kything [appearing] in the same or like effects wherewith he loveth his own body; yea both his soul and body, which are himself: for the words, "as their own bodies," are both an argument to enforce upon them the duty, and a rule to direct them in the right manner of practising the duty.

DOCTRINES.

1. As love in husbands toward their wives, after the pattern of Christ's love unto his church, is a most necessary duty; so (considering the many quench-coals of love which the mutual infirmities both of husbands and wives do frequently furnish, together with that natural proneness which is in corrupt man, being advanced and preferred above others, to abuse his authority, to domineer with a kind of tyranny over such as are under him) it will be found a task not so easy, as at the first it would appear, for husbands to keep this affection and love flowing from the right fountain, and manifesting itself in all its necessary effects towards their wives: for to what purpose else doth he reiterate this exhortation, and enforce it by so strong and convincing arguments? "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies."

2. That place of honour and superiority, which God hath given the man over the wife, as appointing him to be her head, doth tie him unto answerable duty; so that the greater his honour is, the greater is his burden: and in particular, it bindeth him to love her, and from love to govern, instruct, cherish her, and provide for her, and to all other things by proportion, which the head doth for the body: for from what he said, ver. 23, that the husband is the head of the wife, he inferreth here, "So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies."

3. Though there be a sinful love to a man's self, whereby a man preferreth himself, and the fulfilling of his inordinate desires to God's glory and the good of his neighbour, Phil. ii. 21, which by all means is to be eschewed and mortified, Luke ix. 23; yet there is an orderly, lawful, and allowed love to "self," whereby a man doth seek his own preservation, both in soul and body, by just and lawful means, with due subordination to God's glory, and without any opposition to or setting himself against his neighbour's good: for Paul supposeth this love ought to be

in every man towards himself, and doth urge it, as the reason and rule of the love which the husband oweth to his wife, while he saith, "men ought to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himself."

4. The love which husbands do carry to their wives, ought not to have its rise from any such extrinsical considerations as love to their own peace and ease, fear of shame and disgrace, if, through want of love, secret discontents break out to public strife, or from any satisfaction which they find to their carnal affections, but from respect to God's holy ordinance, whereby their wives are made a piece of themselves; hence their love shall be most native, operative, yea, and insuperable by any provocations or infirmities, when they shall look upon their wives as themselves, and consequently upon their infirmities, shame, hurt, as their own: for Paul will have their love to flow from this fountain, while he saith, "Men ought to love their wives, as their own bodies," &c.

5. That husbands may carry themselves aright towards their wives, (which holdeth of all superiors with relation to their inferiors,) they would seriously consider, not so much what is in the power of their hand, and what they are able to do, or may be for their profit and advantage, or tend to get themselves obeyed, feared, and respected to the utmost, as what they ought, and is incumbent for them to do, and what the law of God, and the state they are in, do require from them as their duty: for the apostle repeateth the former exhortation held forth, ver. 25, with the addition of one word, to wit, "ought," whereby he mindeth husbands, that the thing pressed was their duty, and therefore they were to mind it; "So ought men to love their wives," saith he.

VER. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

He proveth the consequence of the former argument, to wit, that husbands are to love their wives, because they are their own bodies, by three reasons. The first is taken from the universal custom of all men, to wit, who are in their right wit, not demented and woefully deluded by the devil: which is set down, first, negatively, "no man did ever hate his own flesh," or from hatred did any damage to it; and next, positively, every such man doth to his utmost provide for and allow upon his own flesh, all things necessary both for "nourishing" or feeding it, and for "cherishing" and keeping it warm, with such a sort of care and tenderness as hens have toward their young ones, while, by casting their wings over them, they do with their own natural heat keep the young ones warm: for the word rendered "cherishing," is a metaphor taken from the practice of those tender and loving creatures: by all which, he not only proveth that husbands should love their wives, as being their own body; but also hinteth at some of those effects, wherein their love should be made manifest, whereof particular mention shall be made among the observations. Secondly, he proveth the same conse-

quence, and also further cleareth with what care and tenderness the husband should carry himself unto his wife, as to his own body, from Christ's example, who nourisheth and cherisheth the church, his body, by providing for her, and allowing on her all things necessary for soul and body.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is no less monstrous and unnatural for a man to hate, and from hatred to carry himself austere, saucily, and undutifully to his wife, than if in a fit of phrenzy he should hate, and from hatred refuse to do all the duty to himself, but instead thereof to be cruel against himself; for the apostle mentioneth this, "no man," not demented, "did ever hate his own flesh," to show that therefore husbands ought as much to abhor and abstain from hating their wives; "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh."

2. It is not sufficient that husbands do not carry any hatred to their wives, but they must also love them, and evidence their love to them, not in empty words, and flattering insinuations, but in providing all things necessary for them both in food and raiment: for he holdeth forth indirectly the husband's duty to his wife, in that allowed care which every man hath, or ought to have, of his own flesh; "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it."

3. It is the duty of a husband to provide things necessary unto his wife, not grudgingly, or too sparingly, as to a stranger, or to his child or servant, but liberally according to her rank and station, as being his equal; and confidently, without craving an exact account from her of every thing which she receiveth, as having a common right and interest with him in all things that are his; and cheerfully, by testifying such contentment in her, even while he bestoweth things necessary on her, as he would do in bestowing the same or the like on himself: for so much is implied in a man's nourishing and cherishing of his own flesh, which is held forth as the rule of the husband's tender care and liberal benevolence toward his wife; "but nourisheth and cherisheth it."

4. The husband, under pretence of cherishing his wife, ought not to pamper her, or lavishly to waste his estate in upholding her prodigality in apparel, unnecessary expensive ornaments, and such like vanities; but the rule according to which he is to walk in those things, and more than which the wife ought not to expect from her husband, nor yet complain if he come up to it, is what his own rank requireth, his necessity doth permit, and that tender care which is taken by him in nourishing and cherishing himself: for this is here held forth as his rule, "But nourisheth and cherisheth it," to wit, his own flesh.

5. Though there be an excessive pampering of the flesh, which is sinful and forbidden, when provision is made for it to fulfil the lusts thereof, Rom. xiii. 14; yet there is a lawful and necessary care of the flesh, or of a man's own body, whereby things necessary for food and raiment are bestowed upon it, in so far that health and strength be not inlacking for discharging the duties of our calling: for Paul doth not con-

demr., but approve this custom among men, that "No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it."

6. As Christ's example in his dealing towards the church is a most excellent copy, to be eyed and imitated by husbands in their carriage toward their wives, and that not only in their love, but in all those other duties flowing from love, which they owe unto them; so it doth concern both husbands and wives to eye this pattern much, and to draw their motives and encouragements unto their mutual duties from it, as that which will much conduce to keep their hearts in a spiritual frame, even in those performances, and to prevent that carnal, worldly disposition which the misguided care of performing such duties as the married state of life calleth for, doth usually contract: for as he propounded Christ's example for a motive to and pattern of the duty of love, ver. 25, so of those duties also, of nourishing and cherishing, which flow from it in this verse, "even as the Lord the church."

7. A husband's care ought to extend itself, not only to nourish and cherish his wife in things temporal, and which concern her body only, but also in things spiritual, and which concern her soul; and therefore he would be circumspect, lest (under pretence of eschewing all suspicion of displeasure with her, and of giving necessary tokens and evidences of his love and kindness to her, in order to his outward cherishing her) he do neither willingly neglect the care of her salvation, or by fondness or lightness incapacitate himself to do her any good in that respect: for Christ doth nourish and cherish his church, by taking care of and providing mainly for the souls and eternal state of his people; and husbands are commanded here to make him their pattern, "even as the Lord the church," saith he.

VER. 30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

He giveth here a reason why Christ doth so cherish his church, where instead of naming the church expressly, which the sequel of his discourse did require, he mentioneth himself and other true believers among the Ephesians under the pronoun "we;" the church here spoken of, for whom Christ ~~and~~ give himself, being only made up of such: and the reason is taken from that near and strict union, or that spiritual marriage, which is betwixt Christ and believers, whereof that ancient marriage betwixt Adam and Eve was a kind of type and shadow, as appeareth from the words here used, which are taken from Gen. ii. 23, and were uttered at first by Adam concerning himself and his wife, but are here, by allusion to that marriage of theirs, made use of to set forth the spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and his church, the tie and bond whereof is so near and strict, that as the apostle sheweth, all believers are members of his body; yea, not only of one nature with him, which is common to them with all mankind, but also as they are new creatures, they have their original and nourishment from him, even from his flesh and bones, in so far as they owe the beginning,

progress, and accomplishment of their spiritual life, to Christ his taking on of flesh, and his suffering in the flesh, and by the virtue of those his sufferings, they are quickened and fed, and so are "of his flesh," and "of his bones."

DOCTRINES.

1. Then do we speak, and hear to our comfort and edification, these truths, which express the tender and warm care of Christ unto his church, when we make application of them to ourselves, and by a lively faith do enter ourselves among these for whom he doth so care: for the apostle having in the preceding verse spoken of Christ's nourishing and cherishing of his church, applieth that to himself, and other true believers among the Ephesians, while he saith, "For we are members of his body."

2. Then may we upon good grounds apply these general truths unto ourselves, when, as members of Christ's mystical body, we draw our spiritual life and nourishment from that virtue and influence which Christ hath purchased by his sufferings in the flesh; for upon this ground Paul doth substitute himself, and other true believers instead of the church, and claimeth interest in Christ's tender and warm care, whereby he doth nourish and cherish his church, while he saith, "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

3. There is no relation which Christ hath taken on toward his church, but it bindeth him to, and accordingly he will perform all those answerable duties which men under these relations are bound to perform toward those to whom they have them; for he giveth a reason why he did nourish and cherish his church as a man doth his body, and a husband ought to cherish his wife, because he had taken on the relation of a head and husband to his church, while he saith, "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

4. As true believers have a twofold being, one natural and another spiritual, so they have a twofold original, answerable to each of these; in their natural being they owe their original under God unto their parents, as being bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, as Eve, the first woman, did owe it to her husband. But as they are renewed and born over again, they owe their spiritual being not to the will of the flesh, or the will of man, John i. 13, but to the virtue of Christ's obedience and sufferings in his flesh, 1 John iv. 9; for he saith not, "they are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh," as Adam saith of his wife, Gen. ii. 23, to point that she did owe her natural being unto him, as being come and made of him, but that they were "of his bone and flesh," to wit, in their spiritual being, as they were renewed and members of his body; "For we are members of his body, of his bone, and of his flesh."

VER. 31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This verse, in the literal, plain, and historical

sense of the words, holdeth forth the law of "marriage," binding all married parties in all times, which was pronounced by Adam, Gen. ii. 24, and approved by God himself, Matt. xix. 5. And the words taken in this sense contain the third reason, to prove the former consequence, ver. 28, that seeing wives are the bodies of their husbands, therefore they should be loved. The argument is taken from that law of marriage, expressly declaring that "for this cause," to wit, because the wife is bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, as the cause is expressed, Gen. ii. 23, 24, which is the same in effect with the cause given, ver. 28, even because she is the body of the husband, to which this verse literally taken doth relate, or to the thirtieth verse immediately preceding, in so far as the strict union which is between married parties, is there alluded unto. Upon all which causes, or rather one and the same cause expressed in all those places, that law doth declare, first, That the man is to "leave father and mother," to wit, not by casting off natural affection to his parents, Gen. xlv. 34, or by refusing to help them in their strait, 1 Tim. v. 4, but by loving his wife more than them, and by leaving his father's family, if he, his wife, and they, cannot all live together, and by joining in a new family with his wife, Gen. xxviii. 5, as is further cleared by the second thing here declared, to wit, that he ought to "be joined" inseparably to "his wife," and that both in affection, Prov. v. 19, and co-habitation, dwelling with her, 1 Pet. iii. 7. The word in the original doth signify such a "joining" as that of two boards of timber, firmly glued together; not as if a man were to reside constantly at home, for the merchant, the lawyer, and men of other employments also, must sometimes go abroad, Prov. vii. 19, 20; but his fixed dwelling should be with her, and his presence also, so far as his necessary calling shall permit, so that he is not without necessity to be absent from his own home, Prov. v. 19. And, secondly, this law declareth, that "they two shall be one flesh;" which implieth, first, a most strict union, so that they cannot be separated, (except in the case of adultery, Matt. xix. 9, and wilful desertion of the one party, persisted in, after all means used to the contrary, 1 Cor. vii. 15,) more than a piece of a man's body may be cut off from the rest; and, secondly, a most intimate communion, whereby they have common goods, common friends, yea, and all things common, as if they were but one person; and, thirdly, the lawful and sanctified use of the marriage-bed, allowed unto them of God, which out of the case of marriage is sinful and damnable, 1 Cor. vi. 16, Heb. xiii. 4. But for further clearing of the words, know, that beside their literal and historical sense, God intended that the purpose contained in them, concerning the carnal marriage of man and woman, should represent and shadow forth somewhat of Christ, and of that spiritual marriage between Christ and the church, as appeareth from the situation of the words immediately after ver. 30, which doth evidently speak of Christ, as is already shown; and before ver. 32, where he declareth that the purpose in hand is a mystery, and to be understood of Christ and

the church: now the purpose here expressed doth hold in Christ, by analogy and proportion, in so far as Christ did leave his Father, by laying aside the glory which he had with him, John xvi. 28, and taking on the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 8, and did leave his mother Mary also, and her house and family, Luke ii. 49, that he might purchase a bride unto himself, (see ver. 25, 26,) to whom he doth cleave inseparably, Rom. viii. 35, and with most tender affection, Heb. iv. 15, by virtue of which spiritual marriage, Christ and believers become, though not one flesh, yet one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17, being most strictly tied together by his Spirit and the grace of faith, from which conjunction, believers so espoused become fruitful in good works, and do bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4.

From the literal sense of this verse, learn, 1. The love of married parties ought to be very great, and second to no love else, but that which we owe to God; for even the love we owe to parents, from whom we have our being, ought to give place unto it; "A man shall leave father and mother," saith he, "and be joined unto his wife."

2. It is lawful and allowed of God unto all persons of all ranks, being come to mature age, 1 Cor. vii. 36, and especially to those who have not the gift of continency, 1 Cor. vii. 9, to enter the married state of life, only if they marry in the Lord, 1 Cor. vii. 39, and therefore the doctrine forbidding marriage to all those who bear office in the church, is the doctrine of devils, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3; for the text speaketh of all men indifferently; "A man shall leave father and mother, and be joined to his wife."

3. Divine commands are always founded upon most just reasons, which would be eyed by us, that so our obedience may be more willing and cheerful, yea, a piece of reasonable service unto God, Rom. xii. 1; for this command given here unto husbands, to cleave unto their wives, is not nakedly propounded, but with a strong reason annexed for enforcing the duty enjoined by it; "For this cause," saith he, "shall a man be joined unto his wife."

4. As children are not to remain always childish, but being come to age and understanding, ought to bestir themselves in providing things necessary and honest, according as the station wherein they are placed by God shall require; so parents ought to remit somewhat of their fatherly authority over their children, as they grow in age and understanding, not expecting nor requiring that children, now come to age, should absolutely and in all things, as formerly, depend upon the counsel and direction of parents, or give themselves wholly to mind their concerns, neglecting every other thing else which may concern themselves; for this law supposeth a state of childhood, wherein children are to be wholly under the authority of parents, minding their concerns and at their direction, and that their coming to age, and entering the married state of life, doth give them more liberty to follow their own direction, and to do for themselves; "A man shall leave father and mother, and be joined to his wife."

5. Whatever hath been the corrupt custom of

men to the contrary, Gen. iv. 19, yet, according to the first institution of marriage, only two, one man and one woman, and not more, either of the one sex or the other, may be lawfully married together at once; for the law saith, "a man shall be joined to his wife," not to his wives, "and they two," not they three, or four, "shall be one flesh."

From the mystical application of the words, and of the purpose comprehended in them, learn, 1. So great a depth is Scripture, that in some parcels thereof, which do appear most plain and easy to be understood, many dark and hid mysteries do lie undiscovered; for under this plain history of the marriage of our first parents, that great mystery of the spiritual conjunction of Christ and his church, was also held forth, as the apostle doth here make clear; "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother." See further to this purpose, upon Gal. iv. ver. 24, Doct. 1, 2.

2. So holy and honourable is the ordinance of marriage in itself, and so highly ought it to be esteemed of by us, that God maketh use of it to shadow forth that blessed union and most holy communion which is betwixt Christ and his church; for what was spoken historically of marriage, is here applied mystically to Christ; "For this cause shall a man leave," &c.

3. As the church of true believers is the bride, the Lamb's wife, espoused already to Christ, so never any man did more to purchase a bride to himself, than Christ hath done for his; he laid aside the glory which he had with the Father, and became of no reputation, as was mystically foretold in this history of the first marriage; "A man shall leave his father and mother."

4. The great travail and trouble which Christ was put to for purchasing a bride unto himself, doth not make him regard her the less now when he hath her; for he doth inseparably cleave unto her, with most ardent and exemplary affection, as was also mystically foretold; "And shall be joined to his wife."

VER. 32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The apostle concludeth this purpose concerning the spiritual conjunction of Christ and his church, here made use of to illustrate that near conjunction betwixt husband and wife, with an observable acclamation that it is "a great mystery;" which word, as it is usually taken in Scripture, doth signify a thing secret, not obvious to every understanding, and hid, either in itself or in its cause and reason, whether it be held out in plain terms, or under the veil of some external sign or figure to represent it. (See 1 Tim. iii. 16, Eph. iii. 3, 1 Cor. xv. 51, Rom. xi. 25, 2 Thess. ii. 7.) And lest, by reason of his speaking all along of the bodily marriage betwixt husband and wife, any had so far mistaken him as to think he called that a mystery, therefore he explaineth himself, by showing he was to be understood, not of the bodily marriage, but of the spiritual, or that strict union or conjunction which is betwixt Christ and his church. Now he calleth this union "a great mystery," because

it is a thing hid in itself before it be revealed, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, yea, and after it remaineth unsearchable by the light of reason, how Christ, now glorified in heaven, can be one with us on earth, and can only be acknowledged by faith, Heb. xi. 1. Besides, the bonds of this blessed union and conjunction are not natural or bodily, but spiritual, even the Spirit of Christ, Eph. ii. 18, and the grace of faith, Eph. iii. 17, and therefore, though the conjunction following upon these bonds be real, John xvii. 21, operative, John xv. 5, and indissoluble, John x. 28, 29, yet the way of it is wholly spiritual and heavenly, and consequently not so much to be searched into by reason, what or how it is, as to be believed that it is, and improved for attaining and finding in ourselves those blessed effects which do attend it where it is.

DOCTRINES.

1. That papists have not ground from this place to make marriage a sacrament, properly so called, is clear from the apostle's own commentary, whereby he sheweth, by the mystery here spoken of, he doth not understand the bodily marriage, but the spiritual; beside that the word "mystery," as we show in the use of Scripture, doth signify a sacred secret, not obvious to ordinary capacity, and therefore every mystery is not a sacrament, (see 2 Thess. ii. 7, Rom. xi. 25;) "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

2. The more a man doth attain to know of this mystery of the mystical union and conjunction which is betwixt Christ and his church, the more he will be ravished with admiration at the unsearchable deepness and profundity of it, so far will he be from thinking himself able sufficiently to comprehend it; for even Paul, who saw as far in this mystery as any other, Eph. iii. 4, doth stand, admire, and cry, "This is a great mystery."

3. As ministers are bound to set forth to the Lord's people that most near and blessed union betwixt Christ and believing souls, and to press upon them the study of the knowledge of it, so both pastors and people have need of much sobriety of spirit in diving into this subject, not trusting to the quickness of their own wit, nor judging of it by natural reason, but resting upon what God hath revealed and made known concerning it, and choosing rather to remain ignorant where he hath not revealed, than curiously to search and pry further than is revealed; for Paul, while he is instructing them in this subject, seeth it necessary to mind them of the profoundness of it; "This is a great mystery."

4. As we are ready, through ignorance or inadvertence, to mistake the right meaning and sense of Scripture, so the Spirit of God, speaking in Scripture, hath carefully guarded against all such mistakes, while he doth clear the right and genuine sense of a doubtful and dark scripture, by Scripture itself, either in the same place or another; for so doth Paul here, while, to obviate a possible mistake, he saith, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

VER. 33. Nevertheless, let every one of you in

particular so love his wife, even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

He doth here, by way of diversion from dipping further at this time in that spiritual conjunction of Christ and his church, exhort both husband and wife to learn from that fore-mentioned law of marriage, a short sum of their respective duties; and first, that every husband, without exception, or admitting any excuse, "would love his wife as himself;" that is, seeing she is a piece of himself, as ver. 28; otherwise if the particle "as" were only a note of similitude, comparing different things, and making a man's love unto himself the rule of his love unto his wife, then every man's neighbours should be equally loved with his wife; for every man is to love his neighbour as himself in that sense, Gal. v. 14. And secondly, he enjoineth the wife that she "reverence," or as the word signifieth, from love do fear her husband; the meaning whereof is, that she inwardly acknowledge that degree of honour which God hath put upon him, 1 Cor. xi. 3, and give evident testimony of her inward esteem, in words, 1 Pet. iii. 6, actions, and whole carriage, and especially in her loathness to offend him, 1 Pet. iii. 2.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though there be some latent mysteries intended by the Spirit of God, to be set forth by some plain histories recorded in Scripture, besides their historical and literal sense; yet we are not, upon that pretence, to turn the whole Scripture into an allegory, as if no more were intended in those Scriptures by the Spirit of God, but only to set forth the spiritual mystery; we ought to look upon the historical and literal sense of them also, and mainly, and make such use of them as being so taken, they will afford; for Paul, having shown the mystical and allegorical use of Adam's words, doth divert from that consideration of them, and pointeth forth what the plain history doth teach concerning the duties of husband and wife; "Nevertheless," saith he, "let every one of you in particular so love his wife."

2. It is not unprofitable for people, that ministers do wind up their large exhortations in a short and pithy sum of what they have spoken at greater length, whereby the memory of people may be somewhat helped, and their affections also may be more forcibly wrought upon, when the strength of a large discourse is contracted in two or three words, and presented both to the understanding and affections of people at once: for so doth Paul in the conclusion, sum up what he had spoken at large, from ver. 22, of the duties both of husbands and wives, in two succinct sentences; "Let every one of you so love his wife," &c.

3. Then do people receive and hear with profit these exhortations which are spoken unto all in general, when they make application of them to themselves, as if they were delivered unto them in peculiar, and by name: for what the apostle spoke indefinitely unto all, ver. 25, he doth here

make particular application of it unto every one; "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular, so love his wife."

4. As married parties are ready to forget their mutual duties, yea, and to sport at such doctrine, which doth press and enjoin those duties; so the ministers of Christ would not only inculcate them the more frequently, but also deliver their exhortation of that kind with greater weight and authority: for the apostle not only repeateth, but, in an authoritative commanding way, bindeth this exhortation on them; "Let every one love his wife; and the wife see that she reverence."

5. As we would labour to infix in our memories a short sum of our most necessary duties, so also of the most moving and taking argument, to enforce the practice of these duties, otherwise the naked knowledge of our duty will prove but ineffectual, to lead us captive, to walk in it: for Paul summeth up both the husband's duty, and the strongest argument to enforce the duty, taken from that near union between him and his wife; "Let every one of you so love his wife as himself."

6. Then, and only then is the duty of subjection and obedience of inferiors toward their superiors, sincerely and heartily discharged and accepted of by God, when it floweth from inward reverence and hearty esteem in the former, toward the place and dignity conferred by God upon the latter: for he here commandeth wives to give reverence to their husbands, thereby pointing at the right fountain of that subjection which he had formerly pressed upon them, ver. 22, 24, even fear flowing from love; "And the wife see that she reverence her husband."

CHAPTER VI.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle insisteth further upon those duties, which are incumbent to Christians as they are members of families. And, first, he presseth upon children obedience to their parents, 1. from the equity of it, ver. 1, which he cleareth from the fifth command, ver. 2. Secondly, from the advantage which should redound to them by it, ver. 3. Next, he presseth upon parents, to hold off the two extremities of rigidity and indulgence towards their children, ver. 4. Thirdly, he presseth upon servants obedience to their masters, which is set forth by several of its necessary qualifications and properties, ver. 5—7, and enforced from the great advantage which they should reap by it, ver. 8. Fourthly, he presseth upon masters their duty, which is to be accompanied with the like qualifications; "fear and trembling" only being excepted, ver. 9.

In the second part, he presseth one duty which belongeth unto all Christians in general, even to prepare for a Christian warfare. And, 1. More generally, that they would take unto them spirits, by making use of the strength which they had without themselves in the Lord Christ, ver. 10, and of the saving graces of God's Spirit inherent

in themselves, ver. 11, which he enforceth from the nature of the warfare and terror of the adversary, ver. 12, 13. Next, he exhorteth them more particularly to put on and make use of six several pieces of the Christian armour. 1. The grace of sincerity. 2. The inherent righteousness of a holy conversation, ver. 14. 3. A resolute frame of heart to charge through all difficulties, ver. 15. 4. The grace of faith, commended from its excellency and usefulness, ver. 16. 5. The well-grounded hope of salvation. 6. Acquaintance with the Lord's written word, ver. 17. Thirdly, he presseth the exercise of prayer as necessary for the obtaining and right use-making of all those, ver. 18; exhorting them to pray for utterance and boldness to himself in particular, ver. 19, because of his office and bonds, ver. 20.

In the third part of the chapter, he concludeth the Epistle, first, by showing he had sent "Tychicus," (whom he highly commendeth) to inform them of his own particular affairs, ver. 21, and to comfort them, ver. 22. Next, by his usual farewell wish for them in particular, ver. 23, and for all the lovers of Christ in general, ver. 24.

VER. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right.

The apostle doth now fall upon the duties of parents and children. And, first, beginneth with children : the word rendered "children," signifieth these who are begotten, even though now come to perfect age. See upon Col. iii. ver. 20, Doct. 2. These he enjoineth to obey their parents : where, by "parents" are meant not only the immediate, but also the mediate parents, as grandfathers, &c., Gen. i. 23; yea, and those also who are in the place of parents, Luke ii. 48, 51. Now, the obedience here enjoined, is as comprehensive as that "honour" enjoined to be given unto parents by children in the fifth command, which is cited, ver. 2, to enforce the obedience here spoken of: and it implieth, first, inward reverence, or acknowledgment of that eminency in which God hath placed parents above their children, joined with fear, Lev. xix. 3, and love, 1 Tim. v. 4, to be testified, as by other outward signs, so by reverent speaking of them and to them, Prov. xxx. 17. 2. Obedience, more strictly taken, so as that children receive the instruction of their parents, Prov. i. 8, execute their lawful commands and directions, even though they be burdensome and hazardous, Gen. xxxvii. 13; 1 Sam. xvii. 20, and accept with patience their reproof and correction, Prov. xv. 3, even though their parents be in some respects faulty therein, Heb. xii. 9, 10. And, thirdly, gratitude and thankfulness, so as that they help parents, when their necessity requireth, 1 Tim. v. 4, and bear with and cover their infirmities, Gen. ix. 22, 23; Prov. xxiii. 22. Now, this duty of obedience in children, is first explained from the manner, motive, and rule of it, while he saith "in the Lord." See this phrase explained upon chap. v. ver. 22. Secondly, it is urged by two arguments, the first whereof is in this verse, and taken from the equity and righteousness which is in it, even that children should do all the fore-

mentioned duties unto their parents, to whom under God they owe their very being : the laws of all nations, even of the most barbarous, do enjoin it; and all creatures who have life and sense, are carried in some measure by a kind of instinct unto it.

Hence, learn, 1. The great and main duty, which a child, as a child, ought to learn, and so to learn as to practise, is to obey his parents, even to receive their instructions, and execute their lawful commands; this being a duty which, of any other, proud and rebellious nature is most averse from, and yet such as nature itself doth plead for its equity : so that whatever children be otherwise for beauty, for strength, for quickness, wisdom, activity, learning, preferment, or honour; yet this being inlacking, they fight against the very law and light of nature, and so are a reproach to their parents, Prov. xix. 26, and do accelerate the judgment of God upon themselves, 1 Sam. ii. 25; for though the obedience here enjoined doth draw with it all those other duties which children owe to their parents, as was shown in the exposition; yet it doth, in the first place, signify a submissive hearkening unto and obeying of their lawful commands, as the word in the original doth imply, which he doth mainly press upon children; "Children obey your parents."

2. This duty of obedience to parents, belongeth unto all children whatsoever, so that neither age, sex, place, honour, or condition, do exempt them wholly from it, 1 Kings ii. 19; for he speaketh indefinitely unto all children, and of both sexes; "Children, obey your parents."

3. Children are bound to obey not only one, but both their parents, the mother as well as the father; yea, the Holy Ghost doth expressly provide for the mother, giving her the precedency, Lev. xix. 3, because, her sex being weaker, she is the more subject to be despised : for he useth a word common to both father and mother, while he saith, "Children, obey your parents."

4. It is not sufficient that children obey their parents, either from a natural instinct or fear of their displeasure, or hope of great things to be received from them and enjoyed by them; but their obedience must flow from conscience of duty towards God, who doth enjoin it, and be regulated by and subordinated to that obedience which they owe to him; otherwise their obedience is only heathenish and natural, but not Christian : for he commandeth, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord."

5. The nature of man is, since the fall, become so perverse and backward, that there is need of a spur of earnest exhortation, enforced with strong and evident reason, to stir us up, even to those duties which are written in broadest letters upon every man's heart by nature : for the apostle seeth it necessary, not only to exhort unto this duty of obedience to parents, but also to enforce his exhortation by arguments; "For this is right," saith he.

6. The first and chief motive which ought to set us on work to any duty, is not so much the advantage which may redound to us by the practice of it, as the equity and righteousness which is in the thing itself, as being commanded by

God, and well-pleasing in his sight: for he enforeth obedience to parents, from the equity of it, before he mention (ver. 3.) the profit which should accrete unto children by it; "For, this is right," saith he.

VER. 2. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise,

The apostle (passing by all other reasons to prove the equity of the former injunction) doth pitch upon one, to wit, the law of God enjoining this duty in the fifth command. The scope of which command is, to prescribe all those duties which inferiors owe to their superiors, and, by consequence, which superiors owe to their inferiors; where all superiors are expressed by the name of "father and mother," because the authority of parents is most natural, and the yoke of it most easily comported with; and therefore all other authority goeth under the name of that, to render it less invidious to those who are to be subject unto it. And the duty enjoined to inferiors, is their giving honour to superiors, which implieth (as was shown, ver. 1.) reverence, obedience, and gratitude. Now, this command is described from its precedency, as being the first and most weighty command in all the second table; and from the manner of propounding it, not nakedly, but with a special promise of a particular mercy subjoined to this command in particular, and expressed, ver. 3, which cannot be said of any other command: for the promise annexed to the second, is a general promise of mercy made to such as keep all the commands.

Hence learn, 1. Whatever God hath commanded in his word, is most righteous, equitable, and just: for he proveth that it is right for children to obey their parents, because the law of God enjoineth, "Honour thy father and mother."

2. Though the law of ceremonies given by Moses doth not oblige Christians, (Christ, the substance of those shadows, being come, Col. ii. 17.) nor yet the judicial law, which was given to the Jewish commonwealth, and to stand and fall with it, Numb. xxxvi. 6, 7; yet the moral law, or the law of the ten commandments, as being never yet repealed by God, doth stand in force, and is binding unto Christians: for Paul doth urge this duty of obedience unto parents upon children, because the moral law enjoineth it: "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise."

3. So far is God from abolishing different ranks, degrees, and states among men, that he taketh special care to have those, and public order in those inviolably preserved, while he not only enjoineth the respective duties of superiors and inferiors, but also giveth them the first and chief place among all those other duties which man doth owe to man: for, saith he, "Honour thy father and mother," by whom, as we show, are meant all lawful superiors; and he addeth, "which is the first commandment," to wit, in the second table.

4. Though God, as absolute Lord, might enjoin us obedience to his commands without giving any promise of a reward; yet so backward are we to our duty, and so merciful is God, that

to overcome our backward unwillingness, he is pleased sweetly to allure us by his gracious promise of a free reward unto our obedience: for here is "a commandment with promise."

VER. 3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Here he sheweth what that promise is, and thereby giveth a second argument to enforce the duty of obedience upon children unto parents, taken from the profit and advantage which should redound unto them by it: for the Lord doth here expressly promise prosperity, and long life to all such as make conscience of this duty. For understanding of which promise, know, that though it was to be understood, even in the most plain and obvious sense of the words, as it was held forth to the ancient church, to whom God used to promise and bestow things carnal and earthly, as an earnest and shadow of things heavenly, 1 Cor. x. 11; yet even then there was a tacit condition implied, to wit, in so far as the thing promised should serve for God's glory, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, and the good of those to whom the promise was made, 1 Kings xiv. 13. But now under the New Testament, though this promise, even in the letter, be doubtless fulfilled unto many, yet it is chiefly to be understood in a spiritual sense, in so far as the godly obedient child, whether he live long or short, doth always live well, because he liveth in God's favour, Psa. lxxiii. 3, and cometh to a full and ripe age, as having reached the prize and mark, for attaining whereof life is given, even the salvation of the soul, Isa. lxx. 20.

Hence learn, 1. Though our first and chief motive unto duty, ought to be the equity and righteousness which is in the thing itself, as being commanded by God; yet we may eye the promised reward, whether temporal or eternal, as a secondary motive and encouragement, providing it be not looked at as a thing to be merited by our obedience, Luke xvii. 10; for as (ver. 1) he enforced this duty of obedience from the equity of it in the first place; so here, from the advantage which should redound unto children by it, in the second place; "That it may be well with thee."

2. So merciful is God to man, that he hath enjoined only those things as equitably righteous and conducing to his own glory, which tend also and no less to our own profit and advantage, so that we need not to separate our own well-being from his glory, but are always to seek the former as a mean of and in subordination to the latter: for the apostle sheweth that this duty of obedience in children, as it tendeth to glorify God in the first place, it being a doing of what is right according to his command; so it tendeth to the advantage of children in the next: "That it may be well with thee."

3. To live well and long upon the earth, is in itself not to be despised or undervalued, in so far as though the godly man the longer he liveth he is the longer kept out of heaven, yet he findeth the more proofs and experiences of God's goodness here on earth, 1 John ii. 13, and hath the larger opportunity of a fair seed-time of

glorifying God here ; and consequently shall of free grace reap a more plentiful harvest of comfort at death, and of glory hereafter, 2 Cor. ix. 6 ; for he promiseth this as a blessing to the obedient child, "that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth : " which, as we show, is accomplished sometimes in the very letter.

4. Then do we rightly apply unto ourselves under the New Testament, those things which were spoken to the Jews under the Old, when passing by what was in such things typical or ascribed to the infant state of the church which then was, we look upon what was substantial, moral, or of common equity as belonging unto us yet : for so much doth the apostle teach, while citing the promise annexed to the fifth command, he saith only, "that thou mayest live long upon the earth," and omitteth the last clause of that promise, to wit, "which the Lord thy God giveth thee," Exod. xx. 12, whereby that promise was in a peculiar manner ascribed to the Jews, and to the land of Canaan, which he did give them to inherit.

5. The best way to thrive even in things worldly, and to attain prosperity, health, wealth, and length of days, so far at least as shall serve for God's glory and our own good, is to live a godly life, by taking heed thereto according to God's word, and especially by giving due reverence and obedience to our natural parents, and consequently to all our lawful superiors, because of the command of God : for unto the command, ver. 2, "Honour thy father and mother," this promise is subjoined, "that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth."

VER. 4. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

He doth here, in a word, set forth the duty of parents ; and because they are apt to abuse their parental authority, and chiefly the fathers, therefore he enjoineth to them, and by consequence to the mothers, to beware of provoking their children to wrath, or of embittering their spirits ; which is done either by denying them that which is their due in food, raiment, or means of education, Lam. iv. 3, or by commanding things in themselves unjust, 1 Sam. xx. 31, or by unjust and rigorous commands about things in their own nature indifferent, 1 Sam. xiv. 29, or inveighing with bitter words against them, chiefly when there is no cause, 1 Sam. xx. 30, and lastly, by beating them either unjustly, when there is no fault, 1 Sam. xx. 33, or immoderately, unseasonably, or basely, when there is a fault. Next, he doth guard them against the other extremity of too much indulgence to their children, while he exhorts them, first, "to bring them up ; " or, as it is in the original, "to nourish them," which comprehendeth not only their giving unto them present maintenance from the womb, Gen. xxi. 7, but also their providing for them against the future, 2 Cor. xii. 14, and training them up in any lawful employment, whereby they may be able under God to sustain them-

selves and theirs, Gen. iv. 2. And, secondly, to join nurture and admonition with their education : by the former whereof, is meant the timely, seasonable, and compassionate correction of children which parents are bound to dispense, Prov. xiii. 24 ; and by the latter is meant the information of their judgment, how they ought to carry themselves towards God in things religious, Gen. xviii. 19, and how towards man in righteousness, civility, and good manners, which is also a great piece of the duty of parents towards children, Prov. xxxi. 1, 8, 9. And, lastly, he addeth, that their education must be in the admonition of the Lord Christ, that is, such as becometh Christians, and by which young ones are instructed chiefly in the knowledge of God's word, of Jesus Christ, and of the way of salvation held forth by him.

Hence learn, 1. Such is the prevalency and interest of sin in the soul of man now fallen, that in some it wholly extinguisheth, or much weakeneth the most intense of our natural affections, and maketh them run in a channel quite contrary unto what they ought : for the apostle supposeth that even natural affection in some parents to their own children will be so far weakened, as by their unnatural carriage to provoke and embitter them, while he saith, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

2. To provoke or stir up others unto sin, maketh us guilty before the Lord, even of those sins which others commit, being provoked thereunto by us, Hos. vi. 9 ; for Paul forbiddeth and condemneth this as a sin in parents towards their children ; "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

3. So small command have all men naturally over their passions, especially when provoked by real injuries from others, that the strongest of natural bonds cannot keep them in order and at under, except they be restrained by grace, but they must transgress the bounds : even children cannot bear injuries from their very parents, without being incited thereby to sinful anger ; yea, such is the corruption of some children that they can bear less at the hands of their parents than of any other else : for so much is implied, while he saith, "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

4. A necessary duty is not to be neglected upon pretence that others may take occasion to sin against the Lord from it, and particularly parents are not to withhold seasonable and necessary correction from their children, even although their children should be enraged and provoked to wrath by it : for notwithstanding he forbiddeth fathers to provoke their children to wrath, yet he will not have them upon that pretence neglecting to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

5. As people are most ready to run from the one extreme of any sin unto the other, from prodigality to sinful parsimony, from rigidity to too much lenity ; so the servants of Christ, while they are dissuading people from the one extremity, had need most carefully to guard lest, under pretence of eschewing that, people do rush upon the other : for the apostle, while he forbiddeth too much rigidity in parents, he seeth it

necessary to guard them against the other extremity of too much indulgence and lenity, while he saith, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

6. It is the duty of parents not only to provide for the bodies and outward estate of their children, but also and mainly to care for their souls, endeavouring by all means possible to bring them up for sons and daughters to the Lord Almighty: for as they are to bring them up, or nourish them, so also to beat down sin in them by nurture or correction, and to make them know Jesus Christ the Lord; "But bring them up," saith he, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

7. As parents are to correct their children sometimes, so they ought not herein to satisfy their own rage and passion, but to go about it with a composed mind, as a piece of service enjoined by God, aiming mainly at the amendment of the faulty child, and in order hereto joining instruction and admonition with correction; yea, and seeking the blessing of Christ to accompany it: for the apostle will have nurture and admonition joined together, and both of them in the Lord: "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

VER. 5. Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

He cometh now, in the last place, to the duties of masters and servants; and, first, beginneth with servants. See the reasons why he insisteth so long on their duty, upon Col. iii. 22. Now, servants were of two sorts; some did serve for hire, or as apprentices, Malachi iii. 5, others were bond-slaves to their masters, being either taken in war, 2 Chron. xxviii. 10, or bought with money, Lev. xxv. 44. The apostle speaketh to both those sorts; and first, giveth a sum of their duty, to wit, obedience "to their masters according to the flesh:" by which designation of "masters" he limiteth their dominion and mastership to the bodies of their servants; to things temporal and of the flesh only; leaving the soul and conscience to God only, who is the alone Lord of conscience, Matt. xxiii. 8. And the obedience here enjoined to be given by servants unto those, as it is largely taken, doth consist in a cheerful executing of all their lawful commands, Matt. viii. 9, even though the thing commanded be laborious, painful, Luke xvii. 7—9, and rigid, 1 Pet. ii. 18; in a meek and patient bearing of their rebukes, Tit. ii. 9, yea, and corrections also, 1 Pet. ii. 18, 20, 21; and in withholding their hands from picking, and their tongues from abusing their masters, by alleging commissions from them which they have not, for their own advantage, 2 Kings v. 20, &c.; and in abstaining carefully from all contriving and procuring of their master's prejudice for benefiting themselves or others, Luke xvi. 1, 2, &c. Secondly, he giveth some properties of this obedience; as first, it must be with "fear and trembling;" which property consisteth in a solicitous and earnest care, and indefatigable diligence in following their

master's affairs to his greatest advantage, Gen. xxxi. 38, 39, joined with reverence flowing from love to their master's person, 1 Tim. vi. 1, and with fear of his displeasure, Mal. i. 6, and is contrary to pride and laziness. See "working with fear and trembling," taken in this sense, Phil. ii. 12. Secondly, their obedience must be "with singleness of heart," which is opposed to a double heart, hypocrisy, and deceit; and it implieth that faithfulness which ought to be in servants towards their masters, as minding and intending from their very heart the thriving and success of their affairs in all things and at all times, Tit. ii. 10. And, thirdly, it must be "as unto Christ," whereby he expresseth the manner, motive, and rule of their obedience. See upon chap. v. 22.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christian liberty, and spiritual freedom from sin, Satan, and God's wrath, is not inconsistent with civil bondage and subjection. Christ and the gospel teacheth no man to cast off that yoke, but how they are to carry themselves as becometh Christians under it: for he speaketh to servants as servants, enjoining them civil subjection, though they were now converted and partakers of that spiritual liberty purchased by Christ, Gal. iii. 28: "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

2. The condition of none is so base or despicable, but free grace in God will stoop so low as to take notice of them in it, yea, and bestow upon them all those precious blessings purchased by Christ; that so grace may appear to be grace, when it hath compassion on those who are in all respects most unworthy and vile: for even some of those servants, who for the most part were bond-slaves, and as little esteemed of by their masters as their very beasts, were converted by the gospel, and are therefore here spoken unto as converts: "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

3. Such is the sufficiency of Scripture, that there is no rank, state, nor degree of persons, even from the king to the bond-slave, to whom it doth not serve as a full and perfect rule to direct them how to walk acceptably in their stations: for here is in it a direction even for servants; "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

4. The great and main lesson which servants, as servants, ought to learn, and so to learn as to practise, is to be obedient to their masters, and, in a word, faithfully and diligently, and according to their master's own lawful directions to go about their affairs; so that whatever they be otherwise for wisdom, breeding, or profession of piety, yet if they be lacking in this, either neglecting their business, or preferring their own wisdom in carrying of it on to the direction of their masters, they are a reproach to the gospel, in so far as they make not conscience of that which the Gospel requireth from them most; for this is it he doth mainly press upon them; "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

5. This duty of obedience belongeth unto all servants towards their masters; so that neither birth, breeding, nor their near relation of kindred unto their masters, do exempt them from it, providing they be servants: for he speaketh indefi-

nity unto all servants; "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

6. This duty of obedience from servants is payable to all masters, without exception, whether they be good or bad, rich or poor, great or small; no diversity of that kind doth detract from the master's authority, nor ought to lessen the servant's obedience: for he speaketh indefinitely also of masters; "Servants, be obedient unto your masters."

7. As the power of masters, yea, and all earthly power whatsoever, doth only reach the body, and the outward temporal concerns of inferiors, and cannot reach their conscience, soul, or spiritual concerns, except to constrain the outward man unto the obedience of what God hath already prescribed in those; so neither ought superiors to make their will an absolute rule to be followed by their inferiors in all things, nor yet inferiors to give up themselves wholly to follow all their directions with a blind and implicit obedience; for they are but "masters according to the flesh," that is, have power over the bodies of servants only.

8. It is not sufficient to do what is commanded by God in any thing, except we do it in that manner wherein it is commanded: and particularly servants must not only yield obedience to their masters, and do them service, but they must do it in such manner as it ought to be done; and in special, their obedience and service must be qualified, as the apostle hath expressed, even with fear and trembling, singleness of heart, &c. See the exposition of this and the two following verses.

9. A proud heart, evidencing itself in a saucy, malapert, aweless, and careless carriage, is most unbecoming the condition of servants, and highly displeasing to God in them, as being opposite to that property of fear and trembling which ought to accompany their obedience: "Be obedient with fear and trembling."

10. Though servants are to stand in awe of their master's displeasure, and even from fear of that to go about their service, Mal. i. 6; yet they must not be actuated from fear alone, nor think themselves exonerated when so much is done as his displeasure will be eschewed; but being acted from other motives also, they must make conscience of several other things in the matter and manner of their service, which the awe and fear of their master would never constrain them unto; for although the master know not the heart, and consequently the servants need not to trouble themselves about their heart from the fear or dread of him, yet they are to obey in "singleness of heart."

11. A servant can never discharge his duty with that sincerity and tenderness which he oweth unto his master, except he have a high esteem of Christ, and in the first place become an obedient servant unto him, that so from love to Christ he may yield himself obedient to his master in Christ, and so far as obedience to him doth not cross that obedience which he oweth to Christ: for he biddeth them be "obedient unto their masters, as unto Christ," and so implieth they must be first obedient unto Christ.

but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Here are more properties of the obedience required from servants, or rather an explanation of that property already expressed, to wit, "singleness of heart:" which he explaineth, First, negatively, while he opposeth it to eye-service, which is here condemned in servants; who then are guilty of this sin when they seem respective to their master's person, and careful of what concerneth him, himself being present; or, when they know their deportment will otherwise come to his knowledge, but at other times are unfaithful and careless. Which sin of eye-service is aggregated [aggravated] from this, that those who are guilty of it are "men-pleasers;" not as if it were simply unlawful for servants to endeavour to please their masters, for that is commanded, Tit. ii. 9; but when they only seek to please them, and that they may seem to please them, care not to deceive them, by appearing to be that in their presence which really they are not; and, consequently, do not labour to approve themselves to the all-seeing eye of God: this is the sin of "men-pleasing" here condemned in servants, as being near of kin to "eye-service." Next, positively, by showing that then did they serve in singleness of heart, when, first, they behaved themselves as "the servants of Christ," knowing that they behaved to be accountable to him, who knoweth the double dealing even of the very heart, Jer. xvii. 10, and that he will accept of their lawful obedience unto their masters, as service done to him. And, secondly, when taking God for their party, and looking upon the lawful commands of their masters, as the will of God unto them, they do set about to execute them cordially and sincerely, even from the heart, without dissimulation and hypocrisy.

DOCTRINES.

1. A single heart is always constant in good, and the same in secret which it is before the view of others: for "eye-service," whereby servants are one thing before their masters, and another thing behind their backs, is here opposed to "singleness of heart;" "not with eye-service."

2. A man may so walk as to content the eye of those who behold, and to please men to the full who can see no further than the outside, 1 Sam. xvi. 7; and yet his way be highly displeasing unto God; for though "eye-service" be a sin displeasing unto God, yet servants may please men with it, as is here implied; "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers."

3. When a man's chief design is to gain applause, and to be well esteemed of by men, he hath no further regard of his duty either to God or men, than what doth make way for the promoting of that design: for "men-pleasing" is the fountain of "eye service" in servants, or of their neglecting duty, but in so far only as they may be seen and approved by their masters: "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers."

4. To propose unto ourselves the pleasing of men, and gaining of approbation, good liking, and applause from them, as our great design to be gained upon any terms, is inconsistent with the

VER. 6. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers,

work of grace in the heart and with that subjection which we owe to the Lord Christ. A man cannot serve two masters, Matt. vi. 24, for he opposeth men-pleasers to the servants of Christ; "not as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ," saith he.

5. The meanest and basest of services which men go about in their lawful callings, being done with the right qualifications, from right motives, for a right end, and in the right manner, is service done to Christ, and will be accepted of by him as such, because he doth command it; and it is done, if done aright, in obedience to his command: for he will have the meanest servants to go about their service "as servants to Christ, and doing the will of God."

6. Then may we reckon the going about of our ordinary employments to be service done to Christ, when we look upon what we do as commanded by God, do it in obedience to his command, and are heartily sincere in what we do, as aiming singly, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, at the honour of God, and the good of those whose good we pretend to and ought to aim at: for he explaineth how servants may reckon themselves as servants to Christ, even by their "doing the will of God from the heart."

7. Our eyeing of God and taking him for our party, to whom we must give an account, even in those things which we do unto men, is a singular help to make us single and straight in all our affairs, and to banish all double dealing, deceit, hunting after applause, and all such like vices, which our heart presumeth to make bold with, when we look to no higher party than poor feckless [weak] man: for that they may be single in heart, and eschew eye-service and man-pleasing, he directeth them to take God for their party; "but as servants to Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

8. Then is the will of God acceptably done, when not only the outward man, as tongue, hand and other members of the body, do act every one their part, but the heart and inmost affections are brought up to the work: otherwise our performances are but a lame sacrifice, as being destitute of that which God doth mainly call for, Prov. xxiii. 26; for he saith, "doing the will of God from the heart."

VER. 7. With good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

Here is a third thing required to the service and obedience of servants in singleness of heart, even that it be with "good-will" and love to their master's person, and to the thriving of his affairs, which is opposite to the doing of their service grudgingly, unpleasantly, or from fear of punishment, and an eye to their own advantage only; and that they may be encouraged to do service from this principle, even to their unworthy masters, he directeth them to fasten their eye upon the Lord, who had subjected them unto such matters, and to know that in yielding that obedience unto them, which was commanded by God, they did service to him rather than to them, and might therefore do it with better will: for the negative particle doth not deny simply,

but comparatively; so that "as to the Lord, and not to men," is to the Lord more than to men, Mark ix. 37.

DOCTRINES.

1. Fear and love of one and the same person may well consist, and both be a conjunct principle, having influence upon one and the same duty; yea, then only is that duty, which floweth from fear, acceptable unto God, when the party to whom the duty is done, whether it be God or men, is not only feared, but also loved: for the obedience of servants must not only flow from fear and trembling, ver. 5, but also from love and good-will; "with good-will doing service."

2. That a man do service to God, whether in the duties of immediate worship, or of his ordinary calling, it is of necessity required that he do it cheerfully, not of necessity and constraint, but with a delight and pleasure in it, as in that which God doth call for at his hands: the Lord doth love a cheerful giver, 2 Cor. ix. 7; for that servants may go about their service to their masters, as servants to Christ, and thereby do the will of God, it is required, "that with good-will they do their service."

3. The most base and meanest of employments, which God doth call us to discharge, ought to be undertaken and discharged by us with cheerfulness and good-will, it being no small credit for prodigal rebels to be entrusted in the meanest piece of service to him: yea, and the more mean and feckless the service be which we discharge, it ought to be gone about with more of cheerfulness, that what is inlacking in the worth of the work, may be made up by the hearty affection and good-will of the worker; for he will have even servants going about their basest employments with good-will, because they did thereby service to God, and he did call them to it; "with good-will doing service as to the Lord."

4. So ingrate is man for the most part, and so slow to reward those from whom he receiveth favour and advantage; yea, so prone to requite them evil for good, Judges ix. 17, 18, that a man can never heartily and with such good-will as he ought, do service to the most of men, except he look to God in and above men, and know that they are thereby doing service to him, whom to serve in the meanest employment, is a sufficient reward for itself, 1 Chron. xxix. 14; besides that he will have none to serve him for nothing, as the following verse doth teach: for the apostle implieth they can never serve their masters with good-will, except they look to God more than to man; therefore he saith, "with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."

VER. 8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

The apostle having thus held forth the necessary requisites of that obedience enjoined unto servants, he doth, thirdly, persuade them to it in this verse, by an argument taken from the great advantage they should reap thereby, while he

showeth, that though their reward from their earthly masters was little or none, yet so merciful is God, that of his own free grace, Rom. xi. 35, and not for any merit in man's service, (which is none, Luke xvii. 10,) he doth largely recompense (sometimes here, Mark x. 30, and always hereafter, Col. iii. 24,) all those who make conscience of doing good, or of going about their calling as service to him; and that in this free retribution of a reward, he taketh notice of the poor bond servant, who serveth God in his calling, as well as of free men and masters. And that this argument may have the more force with them, he appealeth to their own conscience and knowledge for the truth of it, if it was not so as he had affirmed.

DOCTRINES.

1. Then, and then only, may a man reckon himself to do good, or a good work acceptable to God, when the thing he doth is warranted by God's will revealed in his word, when he doth it in singleness of heart, from an inward principle of love and good-will within the heart, and in obedience to God's command, or as service unto him: for the obedience required from servants, was to be so qualified, ver. 5—7, and he doth here call it a "doing good: whatsoever good thing a man doth."

2. Even the basest drudgery of servants being so qualified, is a doing of good, and cometh within the compass of good works, which the Lord will take notice of as such: for it is with an eye to the employment of servants mainly, that he here speaketh: "Whatsoever good thing a man doth, the same shall he receive."

3. As it is lawful to eye the promised reward for our encouragement in the way of duty, so it is the mind of God that every one should, in the due and right order, make particular application unto themselves of such promises as are in Scripture held forth unto all in general: for he holdeth forth the promise of a reward, which is made unto all who do good in general, to be made use of by Christian servants, for their encouragement in particular: "Whatsoever good a man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

4. Promises have no influence to excite unto duty, except the truth of them be known and believed, so that ignorance and misbelief of divine truths are a great cause of abounding profanity and neglect of duty in all ranks: for he layeth the weight of their encouragement to duty from this promise upon the knowledge and faith which they had of it; "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

5. The Lord, in dispensing rewards, looketh not to the external beauty, splendour, or greatness of the work, but to the honesty and sincerity of it, how mean or inconsiderable soever it be otherwise; for the promise of a reward is to the outwardly mean and base works of poor servants, if so they be honest and sincere, as well as to the more splendid, honourable, and expensive works of their rich masters: "The same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

VER. 9. And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

He doth here, in the first place, set down the duties of masters towards their servants; 1. positively, while he enjoineth them "to do the same thing;" which is to be understood, not of the duties themselves, which are much different from the duties of servants, (see them briefly summed up upon Col. iv. ver. 1, Doct. 1, 2,) but of those proportions and conditions which are common to the duties of both; so that the master is bound to discharge his duty towards his servant in singleness of heart, as service to Christ, in obedience to the will and command of God, from his heart, with love and good-will, even as the servant is bound to mind those qualifications in his duty towards his master. Next, negatively, while he forbiddeth "threatening," or rather commandeth to relax and moderate threatening, as the word doth signify; and so the thing forbidden is excess in threatening and boasts, when they are always menacing, oftentimes for light occasions and sometimes for none; and by proportion, all fierce and inhuman way of dealing with servants by masters, whether in words or deeds, is here forbidden also. In the second place, he enforceth this duty, by minding them of that which they did know, at least ought to have known, even that they also as well as their servants had a Master above them to call them to account, to wit, God, who, to make the argument more pungent, is described, 1. From his magnificent and stately palace, where his glory shineth, to wit, the heaven; not as if he were only there, and nowhere else, Jer. xxiii. 24, but to set forth his absolute dominion, 2 Chron. xx. 6, his omniscience, Ps. vi. 4, his holiness, Isa. lvii. 13, and his omnipotency, Ps. cxv. 3; so that their sin could not be hid from him, his holy nature did hate it, he had both right and power to punish it. 2. From his impartiality and justice, in judging so that he respecteth not persons nor faces, outward show and appearances, as the word signifieth; and therefore by persons is not meant the substance, or personal subsistence of men, but their outward state and condition, even that which is conspicuous in man, and doth commonly make him more or less esteemed among men, as country, state of life, riches, poverty, wisdom, learning, &c. and consequently to "respect persons," is to wrest judgment from a sinful respect to the outward state, condition of parties, and such other things which are wholly extrinsic to the cause in hand, which vice the Lord is free of as being the righteous Judge of the world, who cannot be biassed by fear, love, pity, or any other inordinate affection, as man is; and consequently, the outward dignity, power, or wealth of masters, would not make him spare them, if they made not conscience of their duty.

Hence learn, 1. Though masters are freed from subjection and giving obedience unto their servants, yet not from doing duty unto them. Neither

is there any power among men so absolute, no, not that of kings and supreme rulers, Rom. xiii. 3—6, but it implieth an obligation, through virtue of God's ordinance, upon those who are invested with it, to make conscience of several duties towards their inferiors and subjects; for he saith, "And ye, masters, do the same things unto them."

2. It concerneth masters in their place as much as servants in theirs, not only to go about their duty, but also to advert to the manner wherein they do it, even that it be done in sincerity, cordially, cheerfully, taking God for their party more than men: for he saith, "Ye masters, do the same things unto them."

3. It is not only lawful, but in some cases necessary, for masters sometimes to threaten, boast, cast down their countenance upon negligent, lazy, disobedient, and chiefly upon profane servants, providing they do it moderately, and keep off excess: for the apostle doth not simply forbid all threatening, but only prescribeth a moderation thereof; "Forbearing," or "moderating threatening."

4. The servants of Christ, in the reproof of sin, ought mainly to guard against such evils as those to whom they speak, through custom, perverse inclination, or a deluded mind, are most ready to fall into; and so ought people set mainly against such sins in themselves, and thereby defend the wall where it is weakest, and the enemy's greatest force doth lie; for because masters are most prone to break out against their servants in threatening, railing, and reviling words, as thinking words are but wind, and their tongues are their own, Psa. xii. 4, therefore he forbiddeth that evil mainly and expressly: "Forbearing threatening," saith he.

5. As it is very usual for powers on earth sinfully to oversee and not to punish the cruel and unjust dealing of masters towards servants; so those sins which are most connived at by men, are most severely taken notice of by God: for the apostle mindeth them, that God would call masters to an account how they carried towards their servants, though men did not take notice of them: "Knowing that your Master also is in heaven."

6. It is too ordinary for men in place and authority above others, to carry themselves as if they had none above them to be countable unto; or, at least, to dream that the Lord will not take such strict account of them as of their underlings and servants; for the apostle obvieth such thoughts, and so doth indirectly imply that masters did so think, while he saith, "your Master also is in heaven," and "there is no respect of persons with him."

7. Ministers are bound to inculcate even those truths upon the Lord's people, which they in charity do judge to be thoroughly known already by them; because truths are better known than made use of by the most part; yea, the calling to mind of known truths by the public ministry, doth through God's blessing put a new lustre and efficacy upon them for inciting unto duty: for therefore, though the apostle supposeth they knew this truth, yet he putteth them in remembrance of it: "Knowing that your Master is in heaven." See what is observed further upon

this description of God from his royal palace, and impartiality in judgment, upon Col. iii. ver. 25, Doct. 4, 5, and Col. iv. ver. 1, Doct. 4—6.

VER. 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The apostle (having from chap. v. ver. 21, exhorted unto those duties which belong to Christians as they are members of families) doth now, in the second part of this chapter, exhort unto one duty which belongeth unto all Christians in general, the making conscience whereof is necessary for practising all or any of the forementioned duties, even that they would prepare and make ready for a Christian warfare. And being in the first branch of this part of the chapter, unto ver. 14, to enforce this duty more generally, he doth, first, propose the exhortation, to wit, that finally, or notwithstanding of all he had formerly spoken, this one thing did remain yet necessary to be delivered by him, (for so much the original word doth imply,) even that they would "be strong," fortify themselves, take to them spirits and resolutions, in order to their Christian warfare. And this, first, by looking at, and making use of that strength which they had, and all believers have, without themselves in the Lord Christ, who is engaged with them as leader and general in this warfare, John x. 28. And particularly they are to look at, and act their faith upon "the power of his might," or his almighty power, in order to their being strong and resolute, as that which alone was able to answer all their faintings and fears, arising either from their own weakness, Rom. iv. 19, with 21, or the strength of enemies, John xvi. 33.

Hence learn, 1. It is not enough for Christians to know what they ought to do by virtue of their several relations, except they also set about the practice of their duty according to what they know of it; for the apostle, having already instructed them in the knowledge of their duty, he sheweth this one thing was yet remaining, even to prepare themselves with resolution and courage in order to their better practising of it; "Finally," or, this yet remaineth, that ye "be strong in the Lord."

2. As the duties of a Christian life, whether in our general or particular calling, will not be discharged by us without a battle and conflict with strong difficulties and terrible adversaries; so it is the duty of Christ's ministers, not only to press duties upon the Lord's people, but also to forewarn them of these difficulties and dangers which lie in the way of their duty, and to instruct them how to wrestle with and overcome them all; for so doth Paul, having already pressed upon them the duties of their general and particular callings, he doth here not only forewarn them, but also forearm them against difficulties and hazards; "Finally, be strong in the Lord."

3. Though the Lord's servants sometimes may, and are also bound to command and charge the people of God committed to their charge to make conscience of their duty, 1 Tim. vi. 17, yea, and also denounce against them most terrible threatenings if they neglect it, 2 Tim. iv. 2, Tit. i.

13; yet so long as gentle exhortations, enforced with sweet smooth insinuations and rational demonstrations of the equity and necessity of the thing, may prevail, they are rather to be followed by them, thereby testifying their affection unto and charitable esteem of their hearers as of rational men, who are in a greater probability to be wrought upon by insinuations, desires, and convincing reasons, than by threats and boasts; for the apostle doth here gently exhort them, enforcing this exhortation by an insinuating compellation, while he calleth them brethren, and afterwards convinceth them of the equity and necessity of that to which he doth exhort them; "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord."

4. So strong and terrible are these difficulties which Christians are assaulted with in the way of duty, (see ver. 12,) that there is need of more than ordinary strength, resolution, and courage, for meeting with them, and charging through them. Faint-hearted cowards and lazy sluggards will never face them, far less overcome them, Prov. xxii. 13, for, in order to their encountering those difficulties, he biddeth them "be strong," that is, take to them spirits and courage.

5. No natural courage nor hardness of spirit, arising from man's natural temper, (though in some respect sufficient for making men endure any temporal hardship without succumbing, Prov. xviii. 14,) is able to prop and bear us up against the furious assaults of such spiritual adversaries, and breaking discouragements, arising from such multiplied difficulties as daily do assault us in our Christian course: for he biddeth them "be strong," not in themselves or in the power of their own natural resolutions, "but in the Lord, and the power of his might."

6. No strength of grace inherent, no spiritual courage flowing from the graces of God's Spirit in us, is alone and by itself sufficient to make us stand and bear us through as victors in this spiritual conflict: we must besides be underpinned by the power and strength of Christ the Lord without us, by whose influence our inherent graces must be actuated and applied to work, Phil. ii. 13, directed in their work, 2 Thess. iii. 5, recruited daily with a new supply of strength, Isa. xl. 29, and kept from fainting under renewed assaults, Luke xxii. 31, 32, otherwise they can do nothing, John xv. 5; for he biddeth them not only make use of grace inherent, as we shall hear, ver. 11, but also and antecedently, "be strong in the Lord," or in that strength which they had without themselves in the Lord Christ.

7. As whatsoever is in the Lord Christ, must and will be forthcoming for the encouragement, strengthening and bearing through of believers in this spiritual conflict, so their greatest strength and ground of courage in all their conflicts, doth lie in, and ought to arise from, not what they are in themselves, or can do for themselves, but what the Lord Christ is engaged to be and do on their behalf: for he exhorteth them, "be strong in the Lord," thereby implying that the Lord Christ would be forthcoming for them, and that they were to draw their resolution and courage from thence.

8. Christian soldiers, in order to their own encouragement and strengthening for this spiritual

conflict, ought to lay hold upon, and by faith make use, as of whole Christ, and of all those rich and glorious perfections which are in him, so especially of his almighty power and strength, by virtue whereof he doth all his pleasure, Isa. xli. 10, neither is there any thing too hard for him, Gen. xviii. 14. The power of enemies and greatness of difficulties, together with our own weakness, call for this: besides that many of our discouragements arise, not so much or only from misbelief of his good-will to help, as from our atheistical doubtings about his power and strength, which sometimes are expressed, Psa. lxxviii. 20, and sometimes work subtly under ground, as if not his power, but only his good-will were doubted of, which is clear from this, that his good-will is not usually questioned, but when difficulties are great, and to sense and reason insuperable. Hence it is, that having commanded them to act their faith upon whole Christ and all that is in him, he biddeth them pitch upon his almighty power in particular: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

VER. 11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The apostle will have them to be strong and fortify themselves, next, by acquiring and making use of spiritual strength inherent in themselves, while he enjoineth them "to put on the whole armour of God;" that is, the whole furniture and matter of Christian virtues, and all the means which God hath appointed for guarding the soul against Satan's temptations, as he clear-eth afterwards in the particular pieces of this armour. Now, those graces of God's Spirit are called armour, because they defend the soul from, and strike out against, Satan and sinful lusts, as the armour of soldiers in wars do defend the body and hurt the enemy; and the "armour of God," both to show it must be spiritual and not carnal, 2 Cor. x. 5, as being fitted for the heart, soul, and conscience, and not the bodily members; and that God is the author, maker, and inventor of this armour, and accordingly doth bestow it, James i. 17. In the latter part of the verse, he sheweth the end why they should be strong in the Lord, and put on this armour, even that they might "be able to stand;" that is, to hold on their Christian course, (as a soldier standing orderly and keeping his ground,) not running forth beyond the bounds of their calling to cast themselves upon temptations and hazards, nor basely fleeing from or ceding to them when God calleth for valiant resistance; which duty of standing is illustrated from the party whom they were to encounter and to fight against, even Satan, whose subtle wiles and stratagems, whereby he laboureth to entrap souls, cannot be otherways resisted but by putting on of this spiritual armour.

Hence learn, 1. Christians are so to rely upon and make use of the covenantal power and strength of Christ, as not to lie by lazy and idle themselves; they must also have, and accordingly make use of strength inherent in them, and be-

stowed on them by their Lord and general, Jesus Christ. Confidence in Christ, and the conscientious use of all those helps and means appointed by him, cannot be separated: for the apostle, having commanded them, ver. 10, to place their confidence in the power of Christ, will have them here to acquire and make use of spiritual strength inherent in themselves, while he saith, "Put on the whole armour of God."

2. It is only the armour of God, the graces of his Spirit, and such other means as are appointed by him, which Christians are to make use of in this spiritual conflict; whatever armour we use besides, (whether will-worship invented by ourselves, Col. ii. 18, or carnal motives, to oppose the power of sin, or poor subterfuges to cover the guilt of it, Jer. ii. 22,) will hurt, but cannot help in the day of battle: for he biddeth them "put on the armour of God," that is, the graces of the Spirit of God, and all such means as are appointed by him.

3. That a Christian may be truly valiant and come off with honour and safety in this spiritual conflict, he must be wholly armed, and no power of the soul or sense of the body left naked without a guard. And in order to this, that not any saving grace be wanting, 2 Pet. i. 5—7, or the use of any mean appointed by God, neglected, Mark ix. 29, there being work for all, and use of all at one time or other, under one case or other, in relation to one temptation or other: for he biddeth, "put on the whole armour of God," and that not any one piece thereof be wanting; or any part of the man be left naked.

4. It is not enough to have the root and habits of saving grace in the heart, but we must also exercise these graces, and be always acting some one or other of them, 1 Cor. xv. 58, and all of them as occasion offereth, and as suitable objects are presented by God, Gal. vi. 10, otherwise we are not in a fitting posture for this spiritual combat. When grace is idle, sin and Satan are most diligent: for when he biddeth them put on this armour, he meaneth not only a putting on by acquiring the seeds and habits of saving graces at conversion, (for some of them were already converted,) but also a putting on by using and exercising the grace which some of them at least already had: "Put on the whole armour of God."

5. The great adversary of the saints is the devil, who fighteth against them most by lies and calumnies, speaking evil of God and his ways to them, Gen. iii. 5, misrepresenting their own state to themselves, Isa. xlix. 14, and calumniating one of them to another; for the devil is here spoken of as their chief adversary; and the name here given unto him, doth in the original signify a calumniator and slanderer; "That ye may stand against the wiles of the devil."

6. As Satan is most witty and subtle; so he employeth all his skill and subtlety for carrying on this battle against the saints, while he most cunningly contriveth, and with no less subtlety conveyeth, such ensnaring temptations as he knoweth, all things being considered, will be most taking with the person tempted: for here he speaketh of Satan's wiles; the word signifieth methodic witty stratagems.

7. However Satan doth sometimes transform himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14, and covereth his foul designs with most plausible pretences to zeal for God, Luke ix. 54, 55, to pity and natural affection, Matt. xvi. 22, or generally to something which is in itself commendable; yet his great design in all his temptations, even when he speaketh fairest, is to drive the party tempted from his station, either by making him turn the back as a coward, Neh. vi. 10, 11, or driving him beyond the bounds of his calling, Matt. xxvi. 51, or presently to render up his arms and become captive to some one prevalent lust or other, Gen. xxxix. 12; for, while he saith, "that ye may be able to stand against his wiles," he implieth that Satan's aim is to drive us from our station.

8. The great work of a Christian, in relation to those wiles of Satan, is not to imitate him, by bending our wits to ensnare others to a sinful course, as he doth, Matt. xvi. 22, 23, nor yet so much to know his wiles, to lay open the subtlety and deceit that is in them for the use of others, Matt. vii. 22, as to guard against them, and to keep our station notwithstanding of them, even when we are assaulted by them: for, saith Paul, "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

9. It is by the alone virtue of this armour of God, that is, the saving graces of God's Spirit, and the careful exercise of those graces, that Christians are enabled to stand out against Satan's wits and wiles. A piece of natural courage and fixed resolutions, together with the deep engagement of credit and interest, may do much to make a stand out against his avowed force and violence put forth by cruel persecutors; but there is no fence in flesh and blood against his wiles: for he biddeth, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

VER. 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The apostle having thus propounded the duty, doth next enforce it from the nature of this warfare, as being a "wrestling," which is a close combat betwixt two, hand to hand, each exerting their whole force and strength against one another: and from the terror and greatness of those adversaries, whom we are to fight against, described, 1. negatively, or comparatively, that they were "not flesh and blood," that is, any bodily or human power, to wit, only or principally; for the believer doth fight against those also, John xvi. 33; only they are but Satan's auxiliary forces, whom he stirreth up and employeth. Next, positively, the devils and damned angels, described, first, from their magnific titles, "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world:" whereby is set forth their great natural power and strength, together with their prince-like authority and government, which by God's permission they exercise in the world, and

upon wicked men in it by reason of their profanity and ignorance, here called "darkness," as chap. v. ver. 8. Secondly, from their nature, as being for their essence "spiritual," immaterial, and without a body; and for quality most wicked, and here called "wickedness" itself in the abstract, thereby to aggregate their wickedness, as being wholly destitute of all moral goodness. Thirdly, from the place of their abode, the high air, whereof Satan is prince, chap. ii. 2. Or rather, by this particule "in high places," (as many interpreters conceive) he setteth forth somewhat more of the nature of this warfare, to wit, the main matter about which the quarrel is, even high and heavenly things, which tend to the honour of God, and the eternal good of our souls: for the word in the original is, "in the heavenly," without the substantive "places," and it may be as well supplied "heavenly things," as it is, Heb. viii. 5, and ix. 23; and so it readeth well "in," or, "because of heavenly things;" for this particule, rendered "in," is sometimes causal, and rendered "because." (See Matt. xxvi. 31.)

Hence, learn, 1. The Lord doth deal ingenuously with all whom he calleth to fight this spiritual conflict, by letting them know the power, strength, and subtlety of the enemy; and the height of those difficulties which lie in their way to heaven, before they engage, so that none may have occasion to say they were deceived, and made to meet with harder work than they were told of at the first: for he setteth forth the nature of this warfare, and terror of the adversary, to the utmost of what could be said by any: "We wrestle against principalities and powers," &c.

2. So apt are men to dream of the way to heaven as easy, and to trouble themselves but little for attaining to it, Matt. vii. 21, that nothing less is required to make us shake off security, and mind the work of walking to heaven in earnest, than to set before us all those dreadful dangers, insuperable difficulties, and terrible opposition, which of necessity we are to meet with in our way to it; for that they may be excited to shake off laziness and be serious in this work, he seeth it necessary to set before them what dreadful enemies they had to fight against, as appeareth from the causal particule "for," which completh this verse with the former; "Put on the whole armour of God, — for we wrestle against principalities and powers."

3. The malice of Satan, our spiritual adversary, is bent not only against the saints in general, but also against every one in particular, each of whom he setteth upon with so much fury, force, and eagerness, as if he had none to deal with but one alone: for the Christian's conflict with Satan, is here called a "wrestling," which is a close combat betwixt two, hand to hand; and the original word signifieth such a strife as maketh the body shake again; "We wrestle," saith he.

4. Every saint and real believer is this "one," whom Satan so assaulteth: he forbeareth none, but setteth upon all; the strongest are not a terror to him, nor yet the meanest are so far undervalued by him, as not to think them worthy of his wrath; and therefore all must fight and wrestle: for the apostle of purpose changeth the pronoun "ye," in the former verse, into "we" in

this, to show that neither he nor any other was exempted from wrestling; "We wrestle," saith he.

5. No place, no inward case, or outward condition wherein a Christian doth fall, can give him ease from or a safe peace with this restless adversary: his greatest safety is to be wrestling daily and without intermission; for he saith not 'we did wrestle,' or 'shall wrestle,' but in the present time, "we wrestle:" which implieth a continued action.

6. Devils and damned evil spirits are a more terrible and dangerous party to wrestle with than any bodily or human power; yea, though all the skill, courage, valour, strength, which ever was amongst men, were united and placed in one, this dreadful adversary, (for strength, for craft, for unwearied diligence, for unpeaceableness of spirit against his party, for his malice, not so much against our body and outward estate, as against our choicest part, even the immortal soul; for his courage to assault, his nimbleness to pursue, his immortal nature, that he never dieth,) goeth far beyond the most terrible of men; yea, and all men: for he extenuateth the power and terror of flesh and blood, being compared with Satan's, making the latter far more terrible than the former, while he saith, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers."

7. As men in tempting us to sin directly or indirectly, are subservient to Satan, and in that respect acted by him, Matt. xvi. 23. So our surest way to guard against all such temptations, is to look at Satan as our chief party, who maketh use of man one way or other, to promote his soul-ruining designs, and upon our ceding to the temptation, as a giving place to the devil, Eph. iv. 27; for, while he saith, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers," he would have them to look at Satan as their chief adversary, even when they are tempted by men.

8. It is Satan's constant work, not only to sin against the Lord himself; but to incite and tempt others to do the like, and envy and hinder that happiness unto others which he hath irrecoverably fallen from himself: and therefore such as are most active to entice others to sin and wickedness, do resemble Satan most, and are to be looked upon not as men, but incarnate devils. It is their father's work they do, and his lusts they fulfil, John viii. 44, for he maketh it Satan's work to wrestle with the saints and make them sin against the Lord; "We wrestle with principalities and powers."

9. As there is not only one but many devils fighting under one head and chief, Matt. xxv. 41, so all of them are engaged in this spiritual warfare against the saints; and therefore none of Christ's soldiers should dream of ease, there being a sufficient number of enemies to engage all: yea, sometimes many devils do set upon one man at once, Mark v. 9; for all the styles here given to Satan, are in the plural number, to show that they are a numerous enemy; "Principalities, powers, rulers, wickedness."

10. The people of God ought not to extenuate or undervalue the force and power of their ad-

verse party in this spiritual conflict, but look upon them in their outmost strength, most numerous multitude, greatest activity, and in whatsoever may make them terrible : and this not to weaken their own hands ; but to awake them from their security, and to chase them to their strength : for in order to this end, Paul holdeth out their enemy Satan in his most dreadful colours ; " Principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness."

11. Though angels by their fall have lost much, even all their moral goodness, John viii. 44, yet their essence and natural being doth remain, yea, and such properties as do naturally flow from such an excellent being, as strength and ability to do at God's permission whatsoever is not above the course of nature, (see upon chap. ii. ver. 2, Doct. 8.) for which cause they are here called " powers ;" yea, and what through God's permission, their own usurpation, and the voluntary subjection of wicked men unto them, they exercise a prince-like authority over the children of disobedience : for therefore are they called, " principalities and rulers."

12. Whatever prince-like authority Satan hath in the world, and whatever be his might and power to back his authority and make it dreadful, he employeth it all for carrying on this war against the saints. His kingly power over wicked men is made use of for stirring them up sometimes to enice, Gen. xxxix. 7, sometimes to constrain the truly godly to sin against the Lord, Dan. iii. 2, &c. His power and might, whereby, through God's permission, he doth raise up storms, commove the elements, destroy cattle, smite the bodies of men with divers diseases, is all employed for this, to make men, and especially good men, break out in some one or other sinful carriage, Job i. 11, with 14, and ii. 5, with 7 ; for while the apostle designeth our adversary by styles of " principalities and powers," he sheweth whatever authority or power Satan hath, is employed by him for carrying on the war.

13. This prince-like authority and rule which Satan exerciseth, is not absolute and illimited, but hath its own bounds appointed for it by God. As, first, his principality and rule is only in " this world," but not in that which is to come, no, not over the wicked, in whom he now ruleth, but there he and they both shall remain for ever close prisoners in hell, Matt. xxv. 41 ; for Christ is still to rule as Mediator and lord deputy under the Father, until he put down all rule, authority, and power, and consequently Satan's among the rest, 1 Cor. xv. 24 ; hence it is they are called " rulers of this world," that is, now, and not hereafter. Next, his principality is limited only to those who are in their unrenewed state of darkness, sin, and ignorance of God. He may indeed exercise a tyrannical power over the regenerate, but no princely authority, unto which they give unwilling obedience, there being still in such a party for God, 1 John iii. 9, which in one degree or other opposeth itself, at least doth not consent to Satan's usurpation, Rom. vii. 19, Gal. v. 17 ; for he confineth their rule to " darkness," that is, those who are in a state of sin and ignorance ; " Rulers of the darkness."

14. Though Satan cannot so far prevail over

the renewed man as to rule in him, yet he ceaseth not to assault him, if it were but to vex him, Rom. vii. 24 ; yea, and he may so far prevail with his assaults by drawing him on to some particular gross acts of sin, 2 Sam. xi. 4, and thereby to dishonour God, 2 Sam. xii. 14, and to mar his own peace, Ps. xxxii. 3, 4, as that the best of men have need to stand upon their guard against him : for though the apostle doth limit his principality and rule to unrenewed men, yet he maketh even that an argument why he himself and all the converted Ephesians were to stand to their arms against him : which implieth, that at least he would assault them ; yea, and might in part prevail against them : " For we wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world."

15. Natural excellency, greatness and dignity, are very consistent, and oftentimes found to be stained, with the greatest moral deformity ; yea, and most excellent creatures, when they degenerate to wickedness, do usually prove most perverse : for those glorious creatures whom he presently called " principalities and powers," having fallen from God, became not only wicked, but wickedness itself in the abstract ; " Against spiritual wickedness."

16. So base, so shameful, so defiling a thing is sin, that it putteth a stain, a blot, a note of ignominy upon the greatest of created excellences, if once it get place ; yea, the more and more choice excellences that God hath adorned any person with, he proveth the more loathsome and abominable to God, when he giveth loose reins to wickedness : for those princely excellent creatures, by reason of their sin, are branded with this ignominious style, they are " spiritual wickedness."

17. It addeth much to the Christian soldier his disadvantage in this spiritual conflict, that his grand and dreadful enemy, the devil, is of a spiritual and immaterial substance : for, being a spirit, he is of vast understanding, and able to take up our natural inclination, and what temptation will be most prevalent with us, John xii. 6, with Mark xiv. 11 ; he is invisible both in his nature and approaches ; he oft doth reach a deadly blow before we know it is he, 2 Sam. xv. 11 ; he penetrateth all material substance, and cannot be kept out by locked doors ; yea, the external senses being closed, he worketh upon the inward fancy and imagination, Mic. ii. 1 ; he is unwearied in his motions, and never ceaseth to pursue his design, notwithstanding of growing difficulties and multiplied repulses, Gen. xxxix. 7, with 10, 12 ; he hath a singular dexterity in driving us on to act spiritual sins, that is, either inward sins of the heart, or sins that are conversant, not about carnal passions and fleshly lusts, but spiritual objects, such as spiritual pride, error, unbelief, &c., these being more like to his own spiritual substance : for he setteth him forth in his spiritual nature to make him more dreadful, as also (according to the judgment of some interpreters) to hint at the kind of those temptations, which with greatest dexterity and vigour he assaulteth the saints with most, even to spiritual sins, " against spiritual wickedness," or the " spirituals of wickedness," as it is in the original.

18. The malice of Satan doth bend itself against the Christian soldier, not so much in his temporal and worldly, as in his spiritual and heavenly concernments; and whatever he doth to the Christian's hurt and prejudice in the former, it is that he may hereby reach him a blow in the latter, Job i. 11; for Paul doth show the matter about which the quarrel is betwixt Satan and us, to be things heavenly, not earthly; "in high places," better, "because of heavenly things."

19. No worldly concernment or hazard ought to go so near us as that which concerneth the eternal good and salvation of our souls, the hazard of losing those concernments will startle a Christian soldier much, as knowing it can profit him nothing to gain the whole world, if he lose his soul: for to make them take the alarm with greater speed, he sheweth it was not things earthly, but heavenly, which Satan intended to spoil them of; "For we wrestle—for heavenly things," therefore "put on the whole armour of God," as it is ver. 11.

VER. 13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

He doth here first repeat the former exhortation with some small variation, as a conclusion following upon the former reason, while he commandeth them to "take unto them this whole armour," and for the end formerly mentioned, even "that they might be able to withstand" and resist the enemy, as it were, face to face, foot to foot, hand to hand, and this chiefly in the "evil day;" whereby is meant not only the whole time of our life, which is full of temptations, and therefore in that respect evil, but also and chiefly some circumstantial time wherein temptations were to abound, chiefly the time of death, not excluding, but rather probably including that time which was foretold by Paul himself, Acts xx. 29, 30. Next, he enlargeth this end, which was to be attained by their putting on and making use of their armour, not only to their withstanding at the first onset, and during the time of the fight, but also to their standing after the victory, and after they have done all, or overcome all: where by "standing," as it is distinguished from "withstanding," presently mentioned, must be meant the posture not of a soldier, but of a conqueror, who useth to stand when the conquered are thrown upon the ground, Psa. xx. 8.

Hence learn, 1. The dreadful opposition which the Christian soldier must meet with in the way to heaven, should not discourage or make him heartless, but only incite him to shake off security and laziness, and to prepare himself for the day of battle: for from what he hath said ver. 12, of their terrible adversaries, he inferreth here, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour."

2. As our serious fore-casting and thinking upon, together with our preparing ourselves accordingly for this Christian conflict, is a necessary duty; so, such is our love to carnal ease and security, Prov. vi. 9, 10, that we are not easily excited to this duty; one alarm will not

do it: for therefore doth he give them a second almost in the same words; "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God."

3. The graces of God's Spirit, by which the soul is completely armed for this spiritual conflict, are not of our own making or procuring, but being made to our hand by God, we have them for the taking: for he calleth them the whole armour of God, and biddeth the Ephesians only take them; "Take unto you the whole armour of God."

4. As this spiritual armour, or the saving graces of God's Spirit being once put on, may, though not altogether, 1 John iii. 9, yet in a great part, be wrung or wiled from us by the power and sleight of Satan, our dreadful adversary; so we are not in that case to quit the field and yield the cause, but by renewing our faith, repentance, and former diligence in the use of means, Rev. ii. 5, to take them to us again. Neither are they ever so far lost, but they may be recovered, our great general being always at hand to renew our strength, to make us mount up and not be weary, Isa. xl. 29, 31; for the word rendered, "take unto you," signifieth to "take again," or recover that which we have lost or let go.

5. As our spiritual adversaries in this Christian conflict are most fierce pursuers whenever we give them ground, so we are not to expect any truce or quarter from them, but must stand to it and fight it out, placing all our safety in a courageous resistance, avowed defiance, and none at all in base running, or cowardly ceding, or politic compliance: for the apostle will have all their thoughts taken up how to "withstand," which implieth a furious charge and fierce pursuit upon the part of enemies, and an avowed defiance with courageous resistance upon ours: "That we may be able to withstand."

6. Whatever be the terror and strength of our spiritual adversaries, and the weakness and inability of men, destitute of the saving graces of God's Spirit, to resist the meanness of Satan's onsets, 2 Tim. ii. 26, yet of such excellent virtue is this whole armour of God, or those Christian graces wrought in us by the Spirit of God, that when the soul is once endued with them, and attaineth to the dexterous use and exercise of them, the weakest of saints will be enabled to receive, without losing ground, the most furious of Satan's assaults: for it is promised unto them all, even the meanness of them, if they will put on the whole armour of God, "they shall be able to withstand."

7. As there are some evil days by reason of temptations and trouble awaiting Christians, and some of those unavoidable by any, namely, the day of death, Heb. ix. 27; so we ought to be fore-arming and preparing for such days before they come, and with Christian courage resist those violent temptations arising from them when they come, as knowing we are chiefly then called and singled out to give proof of the reality of God's grace in us, Eph. v. 16; for he forewarneth of an ill day approaching, and will have them to arm themselves before it come; "Take to you the whole armour," and to "withstand in the evil day."

8. There can no such evil day befall a Christian, but through help of this spiritual armour, and the kindly exercise of saving graces, he may ride out the storm, and arrive with safety at the wished harbour when it is over and gone, chiefly if trial and trouble find him ready armed and at his duty: for, if they will take to them beforehand this armour of God, he promiseth "they shall be able to withstand in the evil day."

9. It is a singular encouragement to the Christian soldier, that the time of his hottest conflict with afflictions, temptations, and the devil their leader, lasteth not long; it is but a day, an hour, Rev. iii. 10, a short season, 1 Pet. i. 6, yea, but a moment, compared with eternity, 2 Cor. iv. 17; for, in order to their encouragement, he calleth the time of their fighting but a day; "To withstand in the evil day."

10. The Christian soldier, in this spiritual warfare, will meet with many assaults before he obtain a complete victory; there must be variety of conflicts, exercises, and temptations, so that usually his coming out of one is but an entrance into another; the malice of the adversary is unsatiable, his hopes are never quite gone, but what he misseth at one time and one assault, he hopeth to acquire at another, Job ii. 4, 5; for he saith they must first "do all," or "overcome all;" which implieth there are many things to be overcome before they stand as conquerors.

11. It is not enough that the Christian soldier doth once engage in this spiritual warfare, and carry himself courageously in withstanding some few of Satan's assaults, and afterwards fall back and lay down his arms; but he must of necessity endure to the end, and until he receive the very last of Satan's assaults, and overcome them all, if so he expect to stand as conqueror after the fight; for, saith he, "and having done" or "overcome," not only some few assaults, but all, "to stand."

12. It is only this armour of God, those saving graces of his Spirit, and no common gifts or fair flourishes of temporaries and hypocrites, which will enable a Christian to fight all the battles that must be stricken before the complete victory; for only if they take this armour, he sheweth "they shall do," or "overcome all."

13. How many soever the Christian's conflicts be, yet if he take unto him, and use this armour aright, he shall come through all, and stand victorious after all. Christ, our general, in whose victory we have interest, hath overcome all, John xvi. 33; he is engaged in this battle, and fighteth with us, Phil. iv. 13, yea, and prayeth for us, Luke xxii. 32. Besides, none can pluck the believer out of his hand, because the Father and he is stronger than they, John x. 29, and consequently the field cannot be lost, the fighting soldier must one day be a triumphing conqueror; for upon their taking to them this armour, it is promised, that "having done all, they shall stand," to wit, as conquerors.

VER. 14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

The apostle, in the second branch of this

second part of the chapter, (having again exhorted them to stand to it as valorous soldiers, by carrying themselves watchfully and orderly in all the duties of their general and particular station,) giveth an inventory of the several pieces of this armour, both offensive and defensive, exhorting the Christian soldier to put on and make use of each of them; and reckoneth forth all the pieces of complete bodily armour wherewith soldiers used of old to arm their bodies from head to foot, and assigneth some one or other of the graces of God's Spirit, answerable to every one of those for arming the spirit.

Concerning which, know first, in general, that there is no piece of armour here fitted for the back parts, because there is no escaping by flight in this spiritual warfare, James iv. 7, Heb. x. 38. Secondly, that we must not so precisely distinguish the several pieces, as to think that one may not serve for the use of another; for faith, which answereth to the shield here, (see ver. 16,) is called the breastplate, 1 Thess. v. 8. And yet, thirdly, as shall be made clear in the particulars, there is some resemblance between every grace, and that piece of the bodily armour to which it is here compared.

In this verse are two pieces of this armour: the first is "truth," not the truth of doctrine, which is included under the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, but the grace of truth or sincerity, whereby a man endeavoureth to be that really, both unto God and man, for which he giveth himself out, 1 John iii. 18; and giveth himself out for that to both, for which the word of truth doth call upon him, Psa. cxix. 1; which grace of sincerity goeth frequently under the name of "truth," Psa. li. 6, John iv. 24. Now he biddeth them have "their loins girt about" with this grace; and so sheweth it doth answer that piece of the bodily armour which was called the girdle, and was a broad belt wherewith soldiers were girt about the middle, and did serve both for ornament, as being set with drops of brass or silver, and hiding the gap and want between the other pieces of the armour in that place; and also for safety and defence, as keeping all the rest of the armour fast, guarding the belly and strengthening the loins. In like manner this grace of sincerity is the Christian's ornament, John i. 47, covereth many other wants, Gen. xx. 6, is a necessary ingredient in all other graces, without which they are but counterfeit shadows, Prov. xv. 8, and addeth strength and courage to the heart in the day of sore trial, Job xxvii. 5, 6. The second piece of armour is "righteousness;" not the imputed righteousness of Christ, which seemeth to be included under the buckler of faith, but the inherent righteousness of a holy conversation, whereby we are inclined, and do accordingly endeavour, to give both to God and man their due and right, Acts xxiv. 16, according to both the tables of the commands, Luke i. 6, and it answereth that piece of the bodily armour which was called the breastplate, whereby the breast and vital parts therein contained were secured. In like manner this grace of righteousness doth guard the vital parts of the soul, and that wherein the life of a Christian doth consist, to wit, the root and seed

of inherent grace in the heart, 2 Pet. i. 10, and the faith of his interest in God; for righteous walking is an evidence of interest, 1 John ii. 3.

Hence learn, 1. None shall after death stand as victorious over all their spiritual enemies, but such as here do stand as soldiers in a military posture. They must stand as watchmen, Hab. ii. 1, to observe and take up their enemy's motions and approaches, 1 Pet. v. 8, and they must stand as fighters, to resist and withstand all his furious assaults, 1 Pet. v. 9, otherwise they shall never stand as conquerors; for having spoken, ver. 13, of their standing as conquerors at death, he exhorteth them, in order to their standing, that they would here stand as soldiers; "Stand therefore."

2. Assurance and certainty of through-bearing and victory over all our spiritual adversaries, is so far from being in its own nature a pillow to foster security and carnal ease, that it addeth courage and spirit to those who have it, and rendereth them so much the more watchful, active, and diligent; yea, and nothing weakeneth more the hands of a Christian soldier, than diffidence and distrust of success; for from what he promised, ver. 13, that they should stand as conquerors, he encourageth them here to stand in the conflict; "Stand therefore."

3. Whenever a man doth engage to fight under Christ's banner, and betaketh himself to his military posture, he may expect a present charge, and to be set upon without delay by his spiritual adversaries; for no sooner doth he bid them stand, but with the same breath he commandeth them to put on their armour, and be in readiness to receive a present assault; "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about."

4. The Spirit of God, speaking in Scripture, doth usually set out most heavenly and spiritual purposes, by similitudes taken from things earthly, and such as do occur in our ordinary employments, hereby teaching us so to converse among and look upon things earthly, as to gather some spiritual lessons from them; for the apostle doth here resemble every piece of the soldier's armour, to some answerable Christian grace; "Having your loins girt about with truth."

5. The grace of truth and sincerity is a necessary piece of the Christian's armour, without the which we cannot choose but be exposed and laid open to several deadly blows and dangerous temptations from our spiritual adversary; without sincerity we are easily driven to dissemble both with God, Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37, and man, Ps. lv. 21, to go about choicest duties for base and by-ends, Matt. vi. 2, Phil. i. 16, to curtail our obedience, restricting it to some commanded duties only, neglecting others, Mark vi. 17, with 20, yea, and to despair of mercy, or of doing better in time coming, when Satan shall accuse and challenge us for our base hypocrisy in time by-past, to which he himself did tempt us, Matt. xxvii. 4, 5; for the apostle commandeth the Christian soldier to arm himself with truth and sincerity; "Having your loins girt about with truth."

6. Though Satan's chief arms, whereby he fighteth in this spiritual conflict, are deceitful wiles and subtle snares, (see ver. 11,) yet the Christian soldier must not endeavour to over-

come him with his own weapons, but ought to be sincere and straight; he must not lie, no, not for God, Job xiii. 7, 8, neither think to outwit his adversary by yielding a little, and falling back one step, of purpose to advance two for it, or to capitulate with him by yielding to one sin at one time, upon condition to give way unto none other, or not to the same afterwards, which, at the best, is to do evil that good may come, which is condemned, Rom. iii. 8, and is inconsistent with true sincerity and plain dealing, which is here enjoined to the Christian soldier; "Having your loins girt about with truth."

7. The grace of righteousness, or an honest fixed purpose and earnest endeavour to obey God in all his commands, is another necessary piece of a Christian's armour, without which we are exposed and laid open to several deadly blows and dangerous temptations from our spiritual adversary, even such as question our interest in God, and brangle [dispute concerning] our peace with him, Isa. xxxii. 17: without this purpose and endeavour, we are easily driven to break all or any of God's commands, Prov. xi. 5, and xiii. 6, and more particularly to take a sinful course for our own vindication under unjust reproaches, Isa. li. 7, to distrust the providence of God under straits, Gen. xxx. 33, and to make a foul retreat in the day of trial, Prov. xxviii. 1; for the apostle commandeth the Christian soldier to arm himself with righteousness; "And having the breast-plate of righteousness."

8. It is not enough for a Christian soldier to propose unto himself a good and approved end, and to be sincere and straight in aiming at the end proposed; but he must make use of good and approved means, consisting in conscientious practice of all commanded duties, both to God and man: for with sincerity and "truth," which relateth chiefly to the scope and end proposed in our actions, he enjoineth the practice of "righteousness," which giveth to both God and man their right and due.

VER. 15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

The third piece of armour here enjoined to be put on, is "the preparation of the gospel of peace," that is, a prepared and resolute frame of heart to go through our Christian course with cheerfulness and patience, notwithstanding of all the difficulties of the way, (for the word rendered "preparation," is used elsewhere for such firmness of resolution, Acts xxi. 13;) which resolute frame of heart is wrought and begotten by the doctrine of the gospel, in so far as it is the means of making peace and friendship between God and sinners; and therefore is this piece of armour called "the preparation of the gospel of peace." Now he biddeth them have their "feet shod" with this "preparation," and thereby sheweth it doth answer that part of the bodily armour which is called the leg or foot harness, which did serve to defend the legs and feet of soldiers against cold, thorns, stones, and other roughness of the way. In like manner, this prepared resolute frame of heart to charge through all difficulties, doth not only guard the

soul against the pollution of filthy temptations which it doth meet with in the way, Psa. cxix. 103, but also engageth the Christian soldier to go through all the crosses, hardships, and difficulties of the way, with courage and cheerfulness.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Christian soldier is so to stand in the fight, as that he be also daily advancing and marching forwards in his way towards heaven. His duty is both to stand and to advance at once in several respects: he is to withstand and stand against his spiritual adversary, and yet to advance and make progress towards Christ, perfection in grace, and his journey's end: yea, and the more firmly he stand against the one, he advanceth with greater speed towards the other: for the apostle, having exhorted them to stand, ver. 14, he insinuateth here that they must be also advancing, while he biddeth them put on the foot or leg-harness of resolution, which piece of armour was useful for soldiers chiefly when they were upon their march: "And your feet shod."

2. The way wherein the Christian soldier is to march and advance towards heaven is not plain and smooth, or free from trouble and hazard, but beset with temptations and afflictions, as with so many sharp stones, piercing briars and thorns, which make a way impassable to bare-footed travellers: for there was no need of the foot-harness, to which he here alludeth, but in such a way: "And your feet shod."

3. The Christian soldier, therefore, must arm himself with a firm and well-grounded resolution and purpose of heart, to charge through all difficulties, how dear soever it may cost him; this being another necessary piece of the Christian's armour, without the which we are exposed and laid open to several deadly blows and dangerous temptations from our spiritual adversary, even all such as unexpected difficulties and crosses do easily and usually drive an unprepared heart to yield unto; to wit, impatience, Gen. xxx. 1; repining against the Lord, Jonah iv. 9; a spirit of revenge against instruments, 2 Sam. xvi. 9; fainting in duty, Heb. xii. 12; closing with sinful means for attaining an outgate, 1 Sam. xxviii. 7; despair of an outgate, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1; questioning an interest in God because of the cross, Judges vi. 13; and such like: for the apostle commandeth the Christian soldier to arm himself with such a prepared and resolute frame of heart: "And your feet shod with the preparation."

4. It is not every resolution and purpose which will guard the heart against these forementioned blows and temptations, but such as floweth from the glad tidings and intimation of peace and friendship made up between God and us; all our other resolutions will be at length outwared and broken by continual crosses and hardships, Isa. xl. 30: but the Christian who is armed with this, endureth to the end, as knowing God is his friend, Psa. xxiii. 4; there is not wrath in his cup, Isa. liii. 5; his wearisome journey will at last have a happy close, Heb. iv. 9; for the apostle commandeth them to put on such a prepared frame of heart as floweth from the intimation of their peace with God, while he calleth it "the preparation of the gospel of peace."

5. The gospel is only that doctrine which bringeth peace between God and rebels; the law indeed discovereth the feud [feud], Rom. iii. 20, but the gospel doth not only show that peace and friendship may be had, Luke ii. 14, but also the terms upon which it is obtained, Rom. v. 1; yea, and by means of the preaching thereof the Lord doth work us up to embrace these terms, Rom. x. 14, 15, 17: for he ascribeth the making up of our peace with God to the gospel, while he calleth it "the gospel of peace."

6. Where the gospel is blessed of God for making up of friendship and peace, it will be attended in all to whom it is so blessed with a firm and stedfast resolution to follow God in the way of duty, notwithstanding of all difficulties and hardships; for he maketh their putting on this prepared frame of heart to be the native result of peace made with God by means of the gospel, while he saith, "Having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

VER. 16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

The fourth piece of armour, the putting on and use-making whereof is recommended to them above all the rest, is the grace of "faith," by which we believe the truth of God's word in general, Acts xxiv. 14, and in a special manner do receive, John i. 12, and rest upon Christ, Isa. xxvi. 3, for grace here, Phil. iv. 13, and glory hereafter, 1 Tim. i. 16, as he is offered in the gospel, Gal. ii. 16; and it answereth that part of the bodily armour, called the "shield," which was a broad and large piece, made of some strong metal, and being made use of by a skilful hand, did defend the whole body, supply the weakness of any other part of the armour, and guard against all sort of strokes from the enemy. In like manner, faith is a grace of so large extent that it reacheth help to the soul in all its several cases, Hab. ii. 4; it strengtheneth and supplieth the inlacks of all other graces, Acts xv. 9, yea, and guardeth against temptations of all sorts, Mark ix. 23: but more particularly, as the apostle doth here express, it quencheth those of Satan, that wicked one, his temptations, which are called "fiery darts;" that is, violent and piercing temptations, whereby the soul is inflamed with a vehement heat, whether of boiling lusts, or raging despair; and faith doth not only repel some of those temptations before they cease upon the soul, but also quench and extinguish that heat, pain, and horror which boileth in the soul, being wounded by these: all which the grace of faith effectuateth, not by its own strength or force, but through the virtue of Christ whom it doth apprehend, whose power and merit, employed by faith, doth allay and quench all that heat, whether of inflaming lusts, or of boiling impatience, horror, and despair, which those temptations do kindle in the heart wherein they light and are entertained.

Hence learn, 1. Though the Lord's ministers ought to make known unto his people the whole counsel of God, Acts xx. 27, there being no truth

revealed in Scripture the knowledge whereof is not useful either for the being or well-being, for the necessary food or ornament of a Christian, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; yet they are most to inculcate and press upon people's consciences the knowledge and practice of most necessary and weighty truths, chiefly those which are fundamental and of daily use and practice: for the apostle, in pressing the use of the spiritual armour, doth wisely recommend one piece, of special and daily use, above all the rest, while he saith, "Above all, taking the shield of faith."

2. The grace of faith is another necessary piece of a Christian's armour, without the which we are destitute of Christ's imputed righteousness, Phil. iii. 9, and so exposed to the dint of sin-pursuing justice, John iii. 36, and to all the bitter accusations and challenges of the devil our adversary, Rom. viii. 33. We are destitute also of Christ's covenanted strength, which is communicated and engaged for our through-bearing in all our spiritual conflicts only when it is laid hold upon by an act of faith, John xv. 4, 5; and consequently, without the exercise of that grace, we are exposed as a prey to every temptation, and especially to Satan's fiery darts here spoken of in the text, seeing in that case we have no strength to resist them but our own, which indeed is none, John xv. 5: for the apostle commendeth the Christian soldier to arm himself with this grace; "Above all, taking the shield of faith."

3. This grace of faith is the most excellent and necessary piece of all the Christian's armour, in so far as faith (though weak and imperfect in itself, Luke xvii. 5, yet) laying hold on the promise, it engageth the almighty power of God and Christ to be for us, Matt. xv. 28; it giveth life, being, and vigour to the other pieces of this armour, even to all the sanctifying graces of God's Spirit, Acts xv. 9, 1 Tim. i. 5; it maketh up all imperfections, by covering them with Christ's most perfect righteousness, Phil. iii. 9, and so defendeth them against the furious or subtle assaults of Satan, whereby he endeavoureth to make us question their reality, and throw them away as counterfeit, hypocritical, and useless, Lam. iii. 18; it bringeth a fresh supply of strength to the rest from Jesus Christ, when they are weakened, wounded, and almost rendered unprofitable, Isa. xl. 31; yea, it alone doth sometimes keep the believer from total fainting and quitting all, when the rest are shattered, brungled, [squabbed,] disappear, and for the time are useless, Job xiii. 15: for the apostle recommendeth this piece above all the rest, while he saith, "Above all, take the shield of faith."

4. As Satan's great design is to wrest and wring this piece of our armour from us, and that because of its excellency and usefulness, yea, and often doth prevail to mar our use-making of it; so it should be our chiefest care to keep this grace of faith in daily exercise, and without delay to return to the exercise of it when we have fallen from it: for the word rendered "taking," signifieth to take again that which we have lost or let go: "Above all, taking the shield of faith."

5. It is the Christian's duty to study the excellency and usefulness of any grace, and especially

of faith, that thereby he may be incited to seek after it, and to make use of it. We must first put a price upon grace before we be at any pains for it: for that he may incite them to make use of faith, he informeth them of its excellency and usefulness, while he saith, "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts."

6. Though the devils and fallen angels be many, (see ver. 12,) yet so united are they in wickedness and in carrying on their woful work, under one chief head and prince, Matt. xii. 24, 26, as if they were but only one: for therefore doth he speak of the devil as of one: "The fiery darts of the wicked."

7. As Satan, that wicked one, his great work and business is to draw and drive others to sin and wickedness; so he hath several sorts of temptations which he maketh use of for that end, according to the diversity of sins to which he tempteth, and the different tempers and dispositions of those whom he tempteth; he hath not only subtle wiles and stratagems, spoken of ver. 11, but also fiery darts, whether of violent, boiling lusts, or raging despair, which he throweth afar off, and indiscernibly, with great force and violence, wherein they resemble darts: "All the fiery darts of the wicked."

8. Among all the temptations which Satan maketh use of to carry on his woful work, his fiery darts are most hard to be resisted, and where given way to, most dangerous; in so far as they give a double hurt and damage, even as material fiery darts do both wound and burn; so those temptations being entertained, do not only defile the soul with guilt, but also disturb and disquiet it with their force and violence, Hos. vii. 4, or vex, perplex, and put it to pain with that anxiety and horror which they breed in it, Gen. iv. 13: for he commendeth faith above all the rest, from its quenching those temptations, which implieth that they are both hardly resistible and most dangerous: "Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

9. The grace of faith, though never so well exercised, cannot hinder Satan to throw those fiery piercing temptations, nor yet doth it always repel them, but sometimes they pierce even the believer's soul, where, finding suitable fuel, they raise a burning flame, and make great vastation and havoc: for while he saith, faith doth quench them, it is implied they will be sometimes boiling and burning within: "Ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts."

10. The grace of faith not only supplieth the place of armour to ward off blows, but it is also medicinal to cure those dangerous wounds which the soul receiveth in this spiritual conflict, through the prevalency of temptations and the negligent use-making of our other graces; it is both defending and healing armour, for thereby "we are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

11. There is no spiritual disease or wound so desperate, no sin so prevalent in the soul, but the grace of faith, rightly made use of in laying hold on the merit and virtue of Christ's death, is sufficient to cure it and destroy it; yea, and to cure not only one disease, but many; for he attributeth a virtue to it, to "quench fiery darts; and all the fiery darts of the wicked."

VER. 17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God :

In this verse are contained the fifth and sixth pieces of the spiritual armour which he will have them to take and make use of. The fifth is salvation, or the hope of salvation, the thing hoped for being put for hope, as the apostle explaineth himself, 1 Thess. v. 8, which hope is a grace, whereby we patiently expect salvation, both temporal, Psal. lxi. 1, and eternal, Titus i. 2, but chiefly the latter, according to the promise apprehended by faith, and it answereth the part of the bodily armour called the helmet or head-piece, which being the highest piece of all the rest, did defend the head and face, and was so composed as to make the soldier of dreadful appearance unto his enemies. In like manner this grace of well grounded hope doth lift the heart upwards, Psal. xvi. 9, keepeth the head safe and above water, so that the Christian sinketh not, 2 Cor. iv. 16, Rom. v. 3, 4, and bringeth him to so high a pitch of Christian courage as maketh him formidable to his adversary, 1 Sam. xvii. 45, 46. The sixth piece of armour is the written word of God, which answereth that part of the bodily armour called the sword, whereby the soldier useth both to defend himself and wound the enemy. In like manner the word of God laid up in the heart, and made use of pertinently by the Christian soldier, hath somewhat in it to ward off the blow of every temptation, Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10, and maketh Satan retire as one ashamed and wounded, Matt. iv. 10, 11, and it is here called "the sword of the Spirit," because the Spirit of God hath revealed this word, 2 Pet. i. 21; it worketh powerfully upon the spirits of men, Heb. iv. 12; and its efficacy in working dependeth on the Spirit, 2 Cor. x. 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though believers have heaven and salvation already in right and by promise, John iii. 36, yet the Lord, for good and wise reasons, seeth it necessary to delay the performance, and not to give them present possession upon their right: for if there were present possession given, there would be no need of this grace of hope, whereby the believer doth patiently expect salvation promised; "and take the helmet of salvation," or, "of the hope of salvation."

2. The sincere believer during the time of the not performance of promised salvation, may cast his account to meet with many sore assaults, and sad strokes from manifold temptations upon all hands: for what need of an helmet, if there be not appearance of blows? "And take the helmet of salvation."

3. A well grounded hope of salvation according to the promise, is another necessary piece of the Christian's armour, without the which he is deprived of one strong motive and encouragement to the work of sanctification in general, 1 John iii. 3, exposed and laid open to several deadly blows and dangerous temptations from Satan, and more especially to immoderate grief for the death of near relations, 1 Thess. iv. 13;

to the evil of covetousness, and of placing our portion and happiness in this life, as knowing nothing of a better, Psal. xvii. 14, with 15; to the evils of fainting, discouragement, and despair, arising from delayed performance of what is promised, Prov. xiii. 12; from hard sufferings and persecutions for the gospel, 2 Cor. iv. 16, with 18; and from the fear of approaching death, the king of terrors, Prov. xiv. 32: for the apostle commandeth the Christian soldier to arm himself with this grace of hope; "And take the helmet of salvation."

4. Though this saving grace of hope be stronger and weaker in several Christians, according as it hath more or less of a mixture of contrary diffidence, Rom. iv. 18, and though the meanest degree of hope doth serve for good purpose to defend the Christian in some measure against the forementioned temptations, Rom. v. 5, yet it is the Christian soldier's duty, in order to his better guarding against those deadly blows, to aim at no less than a full assurance of hope, even such as maketh him no less diffident to obtain salvation promised, than if he had it in hand: for it seemeth the apostle expresseth the grace of hope by salvation, the object of it, to show their hope should be as much fixed as if they had salvation itself already in possession; "And take the helmet of salvation."

5. The Christian soldier is not always and only to be upon the defending hand, nor to think it enough to keep his sinful evils from prevailing further and growing stronger, but he must also endeavour to pursue them, weaken them, and not to think himself exonerated until he fully subdue them: for the Spirit of God enjoineth the Christian soldier to make use, not only of defensive armour to guard himself, but of offensive also, to pursue and kill the enemy; of which sort is the sword in bodily wars; "And the sword of the Spirit."

6. Acquaintance with the Lord's written word, together with a dexterous use-making of it, is another necessary piece of the Christian's armour, without the which he cannot choose but be exposed to several dangerous blows and deadly temptations, seeing he can neither know sin to be sin, Rom. vii. 7, nor the right way of resisting sin, or of discharging duty, Psal. cxix. 9, and bearing afflictions with Christian courage and patience, Matt. v. 39, but by the word; besides that the timons calling to mind of a word in Scripture, forbidding and threatening such an evil, pressing the practice of such a duty, and speaking encouragement and comfort to the soul exercised with such a cross, is often blessed of God to break the strength of the temptation which inciteth to it, Matt. iv. 10, 11, to furnish the heart with resolution and strength for duty, Psal. cxix. 50, and with Christian courage under the cross, Psal. cxix. 92; for he commandeth the Christian soldier to arm himself with the knowledge of and acquaintance with the word of God; "And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

7. As it is the only virtue and power of God's Spirit which enlivneth the word and maketh it effectual; so it is only the word of God, and no human inventions or magical charms with

which the Spirit of God doth join his power and efficacy to resist and drive away the devil; for therefore he calleth the word "the sword of the Spirit," and expoundeth it to be no other word but the word of God.

VER. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Here is a seventh piece of this armour, or rather a duty the practising whereof is enjoined by God as a mean for obtaining all those fore-mentioned pieces of the spiritual armour from him, together with the right use-making of them against the enemy, and the Lord's successful blessing thereupon. This mean is the duty of prayer, whereby we offer up our desires to God, *Psa. lxii. 8*, for things agreeable to his will, *1 John v. 14*, in the name of Christ, *John xvi. 23*, with confession of our sins, *Psa. xxxii. 5, 6*, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies, *Phil. iv. 6*. Which duty is enjoined, not simply, but with six necessary qualifications, the opening up whereof doth serve for so many doctrines. As, first, we must pray always; which is not to be understood as if we were to do nothing else but pray; but the phrase implieth frequency in this duty, and at all times when opportunity offers, (the original word will bear so much,) together with an endeavour to keep our hearts daily in a praying temper, that when God offereth occasion we may not want a suitable frame and disposition. 2. We must use all kinds of prayer, two whereof are here expressed; first, prayer strictly taken, whereby we seek those good things which we want from God. Next, supplication, whereby we deprecate evils and judgments whether felt or feared. 3. Our prayers and supplications must be in the spirit, as not being a work of the lip, tongue, and memory only, but of the heart and inward man, *Matt. xv. 8*, being stirred up and assisted by the Spirit of God, *Rom. viii. 26, 27*. 4. The exercise of prayer must be joined with watchfulness, a watchfulness especially of the mind. See upon *Col. 4. ver. 2*, *Doct. 3*. 5. It must be with most importunate perseverance, called here "all perseverance," implying that we are not to break off begun diligence in the practice of this duty, *Luke xviii. 1*; yea, and are to reiterate our petitions for one and the same thing, so oft as occasion offereth, until it be granted, *2 Cor. xii. 8*, a seeming repulse or denial making us more vehement, *Luke xviii. 5*, *Matt. xv. 22*, &c. Lastly, it must be extended unto others besides ourselves; which others are first expressed more generally in this verse, to wit, all saints, that is, all those who having given up their name to Christ, are standing church-members, and especially those who have more convincing evidences of saving grace than others. See upon *Phil. iv. ver. 21*, *Doct. 2*. Which is not to be understood as if we were to pray for none but such: we ought to exclude none from our prayers who are in a capacity to be bettered by them, *1 John v. 16*, no, not our very enemies, *Matt. v. 44*; only the saints are to have the chief

room both in our hearts and also in our prayers, as in all other duties flowing from Christian charity, *Gal. vi. ver. 10*.

Hence learn, further, 1. The Christian soldier doth never receive so much from God while he is upon earth, as to stand in need of no more; he needeth always more grace to preserve and improve what is already bestowed, *1 Pet. i. 5*, and to supply emergent necessities and wants, whereof while he breatheth there will be always some new discoveries made, *2 Cor. xii. 7*, with *9*; for notwithstanding of this complete armour given them by God, he will have them yet to be always praying and seeking more; "Praying always," saith he.

2. This whole and complete armour of God can do no good to the Christian soldier, either to defend himself or to offend his adversary, without the Lord's special assistance and concurrence, whereby he actuateth those graces, and without the which habitual grace could never be improved or made use of by us to any good purpose, *Phil. ii. 13*; for therefore he directeth them, having put on this armour, to make their recourse to God by prayer for obtaining his special assistance to improve it aright; "Praying always."

3. The exercise of prayer is most necessary to be made conscience of by the Christian soldier, as that by which he obtaineth all his other armour from God, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26*, with *37*, together with special assistance to improve it and apply it to work, as said is: hereby also he doth recover his armour when it is in a good part lost, *Psa. li. 10*; furbish, sharpen, and make it clear, when it is eaten and consumed with the rust of security, deadness and hardness of heart, *Isa. lxiii. 17*; and by diligent prayer, Satan's assaults and temptations are either kept off and diverted, so that the other armour getteth not much ado, *Matt. xxvi. 41*, *Luke xxi. 36*, or otherwise vigorously resisted; and the other armour, the several graces of God's Spirit, made thereby temptation proof, *Luke xxii. 32*. In a word, prayer is the soul's swift and trusty messenger to God, for receiving new orders, new strength, and all things the Christian soldier needeth either before, after, or in time of fight, and never returneth empty without an answer, *John xvi. 23*: for he enjoineth the exercise of prayer as most necessary to the Christian soldier; "Praying always."

4. As the Christian soldier is never fully freed from all his straits, necessities, and wants, so he ought to live in the daily sense of his own emptiness, and in the faith of God's fulness and willingness to supply all his wants; for he should be praying always, and therefore always sensible of his need to pray, and confident of God's readiness to answer, *James i. 6*. As there are several sorts of prayer, some mental only, *Exod. xiv. 15*, others vocal also, *Psa. v. 1, 2*, some sudden or ejaculatory, *Nehem. fi. 4*, others more solemn and of greater length, *Rom. xv. 30*, and of those latter sort, again, some public or church prayers, *1 Tim. ii. 1*, others private or family prayer, *Acts x. 1-3*, and others secret, as closet prayers, *Matt. vi. 6*; some, again, are ordinary for ordinary causes, and performed at

ordinary times, *Psa. lv. 17*, others are extraordinary upon some special and weighty occasions, requiring more than ordinary affection and time of continuance, *Joel i. 14*, &c.; so all those several sorts of prayer, are to be made conscience of, and none to be neglected, as God doth call to any of them: for the apostle supposing there are several sorts of prayer, enjoineth them "to pray with all prayer."

6. It pleaseth God to exercise his dearest children, not only with the want of several things necessary and good, but also with the presence of many things in themselves evil and hurtful, and those evils both of sin and punishment, as for other reasons, so for this one, that of both the one and the other, they may be making daily errands unto God in prayer, for getting the former supplied, and the latter either removed or prevented: for, as was shown in the exposition, by prayer strictly taken, and as distinguished from "supplication," we seek those good things which we want; and by "supplication" we deprecate evils and judgments: now, the apostle enjoineth them to use both these; "With all prayer and supplication," saith he.

7. However there be more intense affection, and fervency of spirit, together with more assistance from the Spirit of God required in some sort of prayers, to wit, extraordinary, *Joel ii. 12*, to *18*, than in others; yet all our prayers, even those which are ordinary, sudden, and ejaculatory, ought to be joined with some measure of spiritual fervency and intense affection; neither can any of them be discharged aright without the assistance of and influence from the Spirit of God, as being a piece of most immediate worship to God, who is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth, *John iv. 24*; for he requireth that "all prayer and supplication be in the Spirit."

8. There is not any duty which Satan is a greater enemy to, or our hearts more averse from, than this of prayer in the Spirit, it being no small difficulty to bring our hearts up to it, to keep them at it, or make them walk like it afterwards: for so much is supposed while he requireth the exercise of watchfulness, chiefly over the heart, in order to prayer; "Watching thereunto."

9. Neither is there any duty which Satan is more earnest to make us quit and fall from, after we have begun well, and which our hearts are more apt to be discouraged and take up an halt in, than in this duty of praying in the Spirit, and chiefly under delayed answers: for so much is supposed, while he requireth them to persist "with all perseverance," and this not only in some, but in all sorts of prayer.

10. As Christians ought to pray for others as well as for themselves, so the more lively, watchful, and importunate we are in praying for ourselves, the more our heart will be enlarged with desire to take inspection of the necessities of others, and to hold up their case to God: for having enjoined them to pray for themselves "with all prayer and supplication, watching thereunto with all perseverance," he biddeth them, next, "make supplication" for others, even "for all saints."

VER. 19. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

He doth here exhort them to pray for himself in particular, showing, first, what he would have them to ask from God on his behalf, even a gift and dexterity of uttering and expressing his conceptions in public preaching, together with courage and boldness to deliver all his message, without stop or impediment, and as it were with open mouth before all flesh, as God should call him, without all base fear, *2 Tim. i. 7, 8*, shame, *Rom. i. 16*, partiality, *1 Tim. v. 21*, or diffidence of the truth of what he should deliver, *Psa. cxvi. 6, 10*; which gift he doth illustrate from the use which he was to make of it, even that according to the trust committed to him by God, chap. *iii. 8, 9*, he might make known the doctrine of the gospel unto his hearers: which doctrine is here called a "mystery." See upon chap. *i. ver. 9*, Doct. *1*, besides what is already observed upon the parallel place, *Col. iv. 3*.

Hence learn, *1*. As the Lord's people ought chiefly to mind those in their prayers who are most instrumental in the work of God; so it is the duty of Christians to be seeking the mutual help of one another's prayers, and for this end to acquaint one another with their pressing wants and necessities, *James v. 16*, and especially ministers should crave the assistance of their prayers who are committed to his charge: for Paul having exhorted them to pray for all saints, *ver. 18*, doth here incite them to pray for himself in a special manner who was their minister, and an eminent instrument in the Lord's work; "And for me," saith he.

2. The most able and gracious ministers are usually most sensible of that weight and burden which is in the ministerial charge; and so much sensible, that to be fitted for the employments of it, they see a necessity, not only of their own pains and study, their wrestling with God by prayer in secret, but also of the assistance and prayers of others: for Paul, a gracious and able minister, doth see it necessary to seek the help of others; "And for me," saith he.

3. Not only is piety and knowledge required in a minister, but also a gift of utterance, or a singular dexterity to express his conceptions unto others pertinently, plainly, and takingly, without which his other abilities can avail but little to inform the judgments, or work upon the affections of hearers: for therefore doth Paul desire chiefly "that utterance may be given unto him."

4. Whatever gift a minister hath of this kind, whether naturally or otherwise, yet when he cometh to the exercise of it in preaching, he is not so much to rely upon his gift and skill of this kind, as to depend on God for immediate influence and assistance to strengthen his memory, uphold and order the organs of speech, and to give him the present and actual exercise of his gift, lest he either miscarry in the use of it, or otherwise sacrifice to his own drag and net, when God is not depended on, and so provoke the Lord to blast his pains and make them useless: for though

Paul had already a gift of utterance, having now preached so long, and so well; yet he willeth them to seek not only the continuance, but also the actual exercise of it from God whenever he should be put to make use of it; "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me."

5. A plausible gift of utterance, is not all which is required in a minister, he must have faithful boldness to deliver his message, without base fear or partiality joined with his utterance, otherwise he may tickle the ear, but cannot rouse up dead and sleeping consciences: for with utterance he desireth he may be assisted to "open his mouth boldly."

6. So much incensed are people usually at plain dealing in their ministers, so little can they endure to be used by them with holy freedom and boldness, Isa. xxx. 10, so much is there of un-mortified fear of flesh, even in the best of ministers, Matt. x. 26, 28, together with a sinful loathness to intrust the Lord with the event or personal hazards which may follow upon their faithful boldness, Exod. iv. 10, 13; that there is need of special assistance and present influence from God, to make a minister open his mouth boldly, concealing no necessary truth, forbearing the reproof of no known vice, and fearing no flesh, without regard had unto any hazard or loss he may meet with for so doing: for Paul will have them to seek from God on this behalf, "That he may open his mouth boldly."

7. The serious perpending of the excellency, worth, and mysteriousness of the subject, the preaching and making known whereof, is intrusted to ministers, would tend to convince them abundantly of their own insufficiency for such a task, and of the need they stand in of assistance from God, and the help of people's prayers for obtaining his assistance: for this moved Paul to distrust his own strength, and to seek the help of their prayers; even "that he was to make known the mystery of the gospel."

8. The great end for which ministers should be earnest with God for furniture and through-bearing themselves, and incite others to plead with him on their behalf, is not that by virtue thereof they may gain applause, or get themselves exonerated before men, but that the Lord's people may be edified, and Christ exalted, by laying open what rich and excellent things are held forth of him in the gospel: for the end why he desireth a gift of utterance and boldness, is, "To make known the mystery of the gospel."

VER. 20. For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

He doth, first, give two reasons, exciting them to pray for him; First, from his office, he was intrusted by God, as an ambassador in Christ's stead, to publish the glad tidings of reconciliation with God, contained in the gospel, 2 Cor. v. 20. Secondly, from his bonds, which did not hinder him to preach, seeing as the original word, signifying "in a chain," doth imply that at this time he was not bound with fetters, but in the custody of a soldier with whom he might go

abroad, having (as the custom of some prisoners was) a chain on his right arm, which was tied to the soldier's left arm. Next, he repeateth the gift which he would have them to seek from God on his behalf, even to deliver his message with courage and boldness: and he extendeth it further to all those other things which a minister ought to advert unto in preaching. See upon Col. iv. ver. 4, Doct. 11.

Hence, learn, 1. As Christ's ministers do in a singular manner represent his person, and being clothed with authority from him, are sent to treat and transact about the greatest matters on earth in his name, even the making up of peace and friendship betwixt God and sinners, 2 Cor. v. 20; so, their deportment, for gravity, prudence, and holiness, ought to be such, as may conciliate authority to their message, and bring no disgrace or rub upon him whose person they do sustain. It is their duty also to manage their trust with faithfulness, speaking nothing but what they have a commission for from Christ their master, concealing nothing of what is intrusted to them to speak, but delivering all of it with that authority and gravity, boldness and majesty, which becometh the ambassadors of him who is Prince of the kings of the earth, Rev. i. 5; for such is the honour and duty of ambassador among earthly princes; and though this title of ambassador for Christ, did belong to the apostles in all respects chiefly, and in some respects to them only, as that they were confined to no certain charge or country, Matt. xxviii. 19, and absolutely to be trusted as men who could not err, at least in what they wrote, 2 Tim. iii. 16, yet as to many other respects, and chiefly those which are mentioned in the doctrine, it doth belong to all sent ministers; and therefore they are called the angels of the churches, Rev. ii. 1, &c. "For which I am an ambassador," saith he.

2. The matter and purpose contained in the gospel, even the way of making peace between God and sinners, is a business of great importance in God's account, and such as he would have bear weight with us: for an ambassador is not sent among princes and states for trifles, but for things of highest concernment. Now, God sendeth ambassadors to carry the message of the gospel: "For which gospel I am an ambassador," saith he.

3. So great desire hath God, that lost sinners embrace the gospel with his peace and friendship offered in it, that he dealeth with them not as with traitors and rebels; but as persons of dignity and respect, that thereby they may be the more induced to accept his offers: for kings and states send not ambassadors to private obscure men, but to persons of respect and worth. Now, God sendeth ambassadors with the gospel to sinners: "For which I am an ambassador."

4. That God doth graciously condescend to send an honourable embassy for peace and friendship to worthless traitors and rebels, it should make the Lord's people mind and respect those who are intrusted with it, and particularly to hold up their case unto God by prayer for strength, wisdom, and every other thing which becometh those who are employed in such an honourable errand from the great God: for he

biddeth them pray for him, because he was an ambassador sent from God with the gospel; "For which I am an ambassador."

5. Though our provoked Lord doth send a message of peace and friendship unto a rebellious world, and putteth respect upon them by sending ambassadors to them in his stead; yet, such is their ingratitude, and such enemies are they to their own mercies, that in place of giving a thankful meeting to such kind usage, they do what they can to affront the Lord, not only by slighting his message, *Psa. lxxxi. 11*, but by the disgraceful usage of his ambassadors, contrary to the law and practice of all nations: for Paul though Christ's "ambassador," was nevertheless put in bonds "for the gospel."

6. As it concerneth the Lord's people to pray to God for their ministers at all times; so chiefly when they are in a suffering case, lest through their fainting in the day of adversity, they give the truth of God a dash, *Phil. i. 19, 20*, and that they may be enabled by God to bear persecution with such undaunted courage as persecutors may see their labour to be but in vain, *Acts v. 34, &c.* and the truth of God, for which they suffer, may receive no hurt but advantage by their sufferings, *Phil. i. 12*: for he urgeth them to pray for him, from this, that for the gospel "he was an ambassador in bonds."

7. So merciful and long-suffering is God, that when his offer of friendship is rejected by rebels, and his ambassadors, contrary to the law of nations, imprisoned and wronged; yet, he doth not presently give up with them, and denounce an irreconcilable war against them, but pursueth them with kindness, and in a manner beggeth their peace, and will not take a refusal: for his will was, that Paul being put in bonds by them, should yet discharge the office of an ambassador towards them, and deliver the message of peace, even to those who put him and kept him in bonds, if they would have come to hear him; "For which I am an ambassador in bonds."

8. So zealous should ministers be of Christ's honour and the good of souls, that no sufferings for the gospel should make them quit the preaching of it; but even when through persecution they are restrained of that liberty which they sometimes had, they ought to be always doing and making use of what liberty they have: for Paul, though in bonds, is yet doing the office of an ambassador, and thirsting after a spirit of courage from God, for discharging of it faithfully and boldly; "I am an ambassador in bonds," that "therein," or "thereof," meaning the gospel, "I may speak boldly."

9. The Lord setteth bounds to the wrath of men, in so far as he doth easily abate the extremity of their rage towards his servants, and doth not permit it to come to its full height, so long as he hath any use to make of them: for though their rage carried them to put Paul in a chain, yet he restrained them, from making him a close prisoner, he had liberty to preach notwithstanding; "That therein I may speak boldly," saith he.

10. The Lord's servants are to deliver the truths of God with much holy freedom and boldness, not only when they are far from apparent

danger, but even when they are in the mouth of hazard, and ready to be swallowed up by it: if they speak at all, as speak they must, when God doth call them to it, it must be done without all base fear of flesh, with such confidence and boldness as may evidence they are not ashamed of their master or message: for Paul, even "in bonds," resolveth to "speak the gospel boldly," and craveth the help of their prayers for that end.

11. However an unhumiliated heart, puffed up with pride and confidence in his own strength, may judge it a task of no great difficulty to carry a suffering lot with undaunted courage before he be put to it, *Matt. xxvi. 33*, and will readily condemn all as faint-hearted cowards and base backsliders, who ride not out the storm with as much cheerfulness, courage, and resolution, as they conceive themselves would do, *Job iv. 5, 6*; yet an humbled heart, acquainted with sufferings, will not judge so, but so conscious is he of his own weakness, and knoweth so well how hard it is for flesh and blood to deny itself, to postpone its own safety to the keeping of a good conscience, how ready it is to faint under a continued cross, and find out subterfuges of subtle distinctions, thereby to plead for ease and sparing of itself, that he dare not trust his own strength, nor neglect, far less condemn the use of any mean appointed by God for his encouragement and strengthening; for Paul seeth it was no easy thing to speak boldly when in bonds, and that only God could make him so to do; and therefore beggeth the help of their prayers, as a mean appointed for obtaining courage from the Lord: "I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly."

12. It is not every sort of boldness in speech, which a minister ought to aim at, but such as is becoming the excellency of his message, the gravity of his office, and may conduce most to the end of his ministry, the glory of God and good of the hearers. It is not fleshly boldness, or rather brazen-faced impudence, to vent every thing may tend to commend a man to his hearers, or to please their fleshly humours; nor is it foolish temerity, or presumptuous rashness, to speak and utter the holy oracles of God, without premeditation or serious consideration of what is most fitting to be uttered, and likely to have success at such a time, on such persons, and at such a place; but it is a spiritual holy boldness, conjoined with modesty, gravity, and prudence, and such as carrieth along with it in the person where it is the sense and feeling of his own infirmities, *1 Cor. ii. 3*; for the becomingness and decency, here spoken of, as it may be extended to all those necessary qualifications required in a minister, so it doth chiefly qualify that boldness presently spoken of: "That I may speak boldly as I ought to speak."

VER. 21. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

The apostle, being now in the third part of the

chapter, to conclude the epistle, doth first show, that because he neither could write, nor was it expedient to write of every thing in the body of the epistle, he had concurred much to the bearer, who was to give them an account especially of Paul's own affairs, as how it went with him in prison, how the work of the gospel did thrive by his ministry, and generally how he did, or how he carried himself with courage and constancy under every dispensation. And that the bearer might get the more respect and credit, he is described, first, from his name Tychicus, see Acts xx. 4. Secondly, from his state as a Christian, in which respect he is called a brother; (see upon Phil. ii. 25, Doct. 1;) and "a beloved brother," thereby to show that he was loved by Paul, and worthy to be loved by them for his piety and parts. Thirdly, from his office, in which respect he was a minister, and a "faithful minister in the Lord," as answering the trust reposed in him by the Lord Christ, whose servant he was. Fourthly, from the confidence which Paul professeth he had of his fidelity in his present employment, while he persuadeth them he would keep up nothing which it concerned them to know.

Hence learn, 1. The written word of God in Scripture is so contrived, that though nothing necessary unto salvation be omitted, John xx. 31, yet our vain curiosity to know other things not so necessary to be known, is not thereby satisfied; for Paul, having committed unto writing the sum of necessary doctrine, relating both to faith and manners for the church's benefit in all ages, doth not write any thing of his own particular concerns, but intrusteth them to the bearer, as not so necessary to be known to the ages following as to the age then present: "But that ye may also know my affairs, Tychicus shall make known all things."

2. The life and conversation of Christians, and chiefly of ministers, in public and private, under all cases, ought to be such as they need not to be ashamed who do know it; yea, and edification to the church of God may arise from the knowledge of it; for such was Paul's conversation, he acquainteth Tychicus with all, and sendeth him to Ephesus to acquaint the church there with all.

3. It concerneth Christians much to inform themselves of the life and way of eminent men in the church of God, and chiefly of those who are, or have been sufferers for truth, and of the several passages of God's gracious providence towards such, though not to satisfy their vain curiosity, Acts xvii. 21, yet that thereby they may be incited to sympathize with them, Heb. xiii. 3, to follow their example, James v. 10, and to bless the Lord on their behalf, 2 Cor. i. 11; for therefore doth Paul send Tychicus to "make them know his affairs," and how he did.

4. A minister ought to be so affectionate towards his flock, as to prefer their spiritual edification and advantage to his own private concernment: for though Paul was now every day expecting death, and had few to attend upon him, as appeareth from 2 Tim. iv. 6, 10, with 12, 16, yet he sendeth Tychicus unto them, choosing rather that himself should want an attendant, than they a com-

forter; "Tychicus shall make known unto you all things."

5. The minister of Christ should in like manner be ordered with prudence in giving expressions of his affection towards the flock, lest otherwise his imprudent carriage in the manner of what is done, doth more hurt than the thing itself can bring of good and advantage; for therefore the apostle doth not commit the evidences of his affection to be carried to them by every man, but one whom he could trust, and they would respect, even to "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister."

6. As ministers would be loath to give their recommendation and testimony to naughty persons and those who are not deserving, lest thereby they wrong the church of God, and pre-judge their own estimation afterwards when the person recommended by them doth not walk answerably; so they should not deny a testimony to those whom they know to be deserving; so far should they be from labouring to obscure and bear down the graces and gifts of God which are eminent in any of their fellow-labourers, of purpose that they themselves alone may be thought of; for Tychicus was a man deserving, and therefore Paul doth recommend him, which without doubt he would not have done otherwise: "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord."

7. Though God may make use of unconverted ministers to do good in his church, Matt. x. 4, with 8, yet no man can be a faithful minister, or approved of God in his work, except he have saving grace and be in Christ by faith; for Tychicus is first a brother as a sound Christian, and then a "faithful minister in the Lord."

8. That ministers are beloved one of another, and live in love among themselves, is a strong inducement to make the Lord's people allow them room in their affections, and receive their message with better will off their hand; and divisions, carnal emulations, and strifes among ministers themselves, make both their persons and office lose much of their deserved respect among the people: for Paul sheweth that Tychicus was beloved by him, to make him have the more respect from them: "Tychicus, a beloved brother."

9. It is in a singular manner required of a minister, and the prime piece of a minister's commendation, that he be faithful, that is, diligent in his work, 2 Tim. iv. 2, sincere in his aims and endeavours at the glory of God and the good of souls, 1 Pet. iv. 11, neither adding unto nor paring what God hath committed unto him to speak, 2 Cor. ii. 17. Whatever a minister be for learning, prudence, utterance, and other abilities, if he be not faithful, he is but naught, Matt. xxv. 23, with 26, for Paul commendeth Tychicus from this, that he was a "faithful minister in the Lord."

10. A faithful minister will give proof of his fidelity in all the pieces of his employment, not only in public preaching, but also in his private conversing with the Lord's people; yea, and in every thing will labour to answer the trust reposed upon him; for Paul sheweth Tychicus would be faithful, even in relating the case and

state of Paul's particular affairs: "He shall make known unto you all things."

VER. 22. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and *that* he might comfort your hearts.

In prosecution of the former purpose, he sheweth, first, he had not fallen upon Tychicus accidentally, but had chosen and sent him of purpose. And next declareth a twofold end for which he sent him, first, that he might acquaint them with Paul's affairs, as ver. 21; and secondly, that he might be comfortable unto them by his presence, message, preaching, and otherways.

DOCTRINES.

1. The greater pains are taken by Christ's servants to bring matter of edification and spiritual consolation unto the Lord's people, they ought to receive it with so much the better will and liking; for Paul sheweth that both he and Tychicus were at the pains, the one to send, the other to be sent unto them, of purpose hereby to induce them the more to receive the message sent: "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose."

2. The putting a right impression of the case of Christ's suffering servants, and the state of the gospel's thriving upon the hearts of Christians in other remote parts of the church, is a work worth the care and pains of most eminent ministers, if it were to make them undergo a long and tedious journey for that same very end: for "Tychicus was sent unto them for the same purpose, that they might know his affairs."

3. We should labour so to inform ourselves of the case and carriage of others, and how it goeth with the affairs of Christ's kingdom elsewhere, as to be drawing matter of spiritual edification thence, and consequently not to feed our curious humour: for Tychicus, in making known Paul's affairs, was to aim at their spiritual consolation, much more were they to aim at it themselves; "That ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts."

4. It is the duty of every Christian, and chiefly of a faithful minister, to have this end proposed unto himself in all his friendly visits bestowed upon his acquaintance, and chiefly upon his flock in all his familiar conferences with them, in all the intelligence he communicateth unto them, concerning God's dealing with his churches abroad, even that thereby they may not trifle by precious time, or only satisfy curious ears, but furnish some matter of spiritual edification for bettering the inward man: for Tychicus was to make them know Paul's affairs, for this end, that thereby "he might comfort their hearts."

5. To know the several passages of God's gracious providence towards his suffering servants, together with their undaunted courage under sufferings, and the use which God doth make of their sufferings to advance his truth and cause, is and may be sufficient ground of comfort and encouragement unto the Lord's people against the sorrow and sadness which their sharp sufferings, considered in themselves, cannot choose

but affect the lovers of truth with; for Paul implieth, that their hearing of his sufferings had saddened them, and sheweth the relation of God's dealing with him would comfort them; "That ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your heart."

6. A Christian sufferer, supported by God, will not be so anxious about his own case, as the case of others of the Lord's people whom he knoweth to be in sorrow and heaviness; yea, and ready to halt, and be scandalised for his cause: for Paul, knowing their grief, and fearing their fainting at his tribulations, chap. iii. 14, doth send "Tychicus of purpose to comfort their hearts."

VER. 23. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, in the conclusion of the epistle, is contained the apostle's ordinary farewell wish; wherein, designing those to whom he writeth by the name of "brethren," he wisheth unto them in particular, 1. "Peace," that is, peace with God, with their own conscience, one with another, and all sort of prosperity. 2. Mutual love among themselves; for God's love to them is comprehended under "grace" in the following verse. 3. The grace of faith, the fountain of the former, 1 Tim. i. 5; all which he wisheth "from God the Father," not excluding but including the Son and Holy Ghost, (see upon Col. iii. 17, Doct. 3.) and "from Jesus Christ," the Mediator, through virtue of whose merit and intercession all saving benefits are conveyed unto the elect.

DOCTRINES.

1. Ministers, who would have their pains attended with success towards the Lord's people, ought to beg that from God by prayer to be wrought in them, which by their preaching they endeavour to inculcate on them; for peace, love, and faith, are the sum of all which he hath been presently instructing them in, and pressing upon them, and here he seeketh all from God by prayer; "Peace be to the brethren."

2. A minister's prayers for obtaining the Lord's blessing upon his pains towards his flock, should be serious, fervent, insisted upon, and often inculcated, until a gracious answer thereof be granted; for the apostle began with this prayer, or wish, chap. i. 2, and here he closeth with it; "Peace be to the brethren."

3. Even believers are not made perfect in grace at the first, the Lord doth carry on that work by steps and degrees, that somewhat of him may be seen in every step; and therefore as themselves are bound to grow in grace, by adding one grace to another, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, and one degree of the same grace to the former, 2 Pet. iii. 18, so it is the duty of others to help them on towards growth by their prayers and wishes; for those who were already regenerated among the Ephesians, had faith, love, and peace, wrought in them at the first, and Paul wisheth here a further degree of, and growth in, those from God to them; "Peace be to the brethren."

4. Though it be the duty of all to live in

peace and love, yet a truly Christian and peaceable frame of spirit, together with love, which is not a mere moral virtue, but a saving grace flowing from the root of faith, is only to be found among true believers, and should be sought after by such especially; coldriness of affection, and unpeaceable walking, being more unbecoming them than any others; for therefore doth he wish for "peace and love to the brethren," that is, those chiefly who were brethren in Christ and born of God.

5. There cannot be a peaceable frame of spirit in any towards others, nor yet an harmonious walking with them, nor any thing else except sinful rending and shameless striving, but where the grace of love is, whereby the heart is armed against all irritations arising from the infirmities of others to break the bond of peace, Eph. iv. 2, 3; for he conjoineth these two in his wish, "peace," whereof one branch is a peaceable frame of heart and harmonious walking, and "love;" "Peace be to the brethren, and love."

6. As the graces of faith and love are different, and therefore the one cannot be the form or essence of the other, so they are always conjoined; where one is, there the other must be also; for he speaketh of them as two different graces, whereof the one doth necessarily follow upon the other; "And love with faith."

7. See what is already observed from Gal. i. 3, Phil. i. 2, Col. i. 2, upon the persons from whom and through those good things are wished and sought; even "from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

VER. 24. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Here the apostle wisheth for grace, that is, God's free favour and love in Christ, the fountain and sum of all the former good things wished for, and enlargeth his wish towards all believers, described from this, that they "love Jesus Christ in sincerity," or incorruption, (as the word signifieth,) that is, not for a time only, but constantly, not in hypocrisy, or show only, but sincerely and really; and so closeth up all with his "Amen," as an evidence both of his affectionate desire and confidence of an answer.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though we may have a more particular eye to some than to others, by making mention of them expressly in our prayers, because of our charge of them, present employment about them, or other near relations towards them; yet we ought not to exclude any, especially of those who have relation to Christ, but are to remember all such, at least in general, and seek the same good things from God to them which we wish for others; for the apostle, having made express mention of the believing Ephesians, under the name of "brethren," ver. 23, doth here extend his charity and prayers towards all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in general; "Grace be with all them," saith he.

2. The more the heart is exercised in spiritual duties, especially in prayer, it groweth more warm and more enlarged to the exercise of all

those saving graces required in that duty, and especially to public-mindedness, and the exercise of charity towards the saints, and of faith in Jesus Christ; for Paul, continuing his prayers and wish until this verse, getteth his charity enlarged in the exercise of it towards all Christians in general, and his faith strengthened to the owning of Christ as his own; "Grace be with all them that love our Lord."

3. God's grace, or free favour, is the sum of all which a man needeth to wish, either for himself or others; it is virtually all things, so that the man that hath it, wanteth nothing; he hath all good and necessary things in their cause and fountain, he doth also possess all such things in that measure God seeth fitting for him; for in this part of his wish, which relateth to all lovers of Christ in general, he doth only make express mention of "grace," as virtually comprising peace, love, and faith, which he wished to the brethren, ver. 23; "Grace be with all them that love our Lord."

4. Love to Jesus Christ is a sure mark of those who have saving interest in the good things purchased by him, and one of those marks which are best known to the person who hath it; love to Christ where it is, cannot be well hid; for Paul, designing those who might plead interest in the good things prayed for, describeth them by their love to Christ, as being a mark both sure and easily discerned; "With all them that love our Lord."

5. The Lord's servants ought to endeavour that those who are in a gracious state, and have right to the great and good things purchased by Christ, may know so much, and for that end would furnish them with the knowledge of such marks and evidences as may be most easily discerned where they are, and infallibly prove the soul that hath them to be in a state of grace; for Paul giveth such a mark of those who had interest in the good things prayed for, even love to Christ, that they might know so much of themselves; "With all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ."

6. It is the duty of ministers to lay hold, on all occasions, to recommend this grace of love to Christ, by holding forth those many good and excellent things which do accompany it, and are made evident to be in the heart by it, that so the Lord's people may be the more incited to bestow their love and heart upon him; for Paul, to stir them up to the love of Christ, recommendeth this grace, by making it the mark and evidence of the man that hath interest in all the good things wished for; "with all them that love our Lord."

7. Though we are bound to pray even for those who are graceless, that God may bestow grace upon them; yet the more speaking evidences there be of true grace in any, we may be the more encouraged to pray to God for them, and with greater confidence to expect a gracious return of our prayers upon them; for Paul's wishes to God, to which he affixeth an "Amen," in evidence of his confidence to be heard, are put up in behalf of those who do "love our Lord Jesus Christ."

8. As there are many who profess love to

Christ, whose love is, and, when it is tried, will be found to be but counterfeit, insincere, and not real; so the good things promised to those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, do not at all belong to any of that sort, whatsoever their deluded hearts may fancy to the contrary, but to such only who love him really, sincerely, and testify their love unto him by keeping his commandments, John xiv. 15, and especially by loving those who are his, 1 John iv. 20, 21; for the apostle qualifyeth that love to Christ, which is an evidence of interest in the good things wished

for, by sincerity; which implieth there is some love not sincere: "That love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

9. The more sincere a man is in the exercise of any grace, or practice of any duty, he will endure the longer; sincerity in good is always attended with perseverance, but hypocrisy doth soon faint and wholly sit up at the last, Job xxvii. 8, 9, with 10. So much is implied by the word here rendered "sincerity," as Tit. ii. 7, which also signifieth "incorruption;" "That love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

THE
EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

WE do offer unto thy view in the following exposition, an essay of a reverend brother, the author of this piece, toward the opening up of two parcels of the Holy Scriptures, in such a way as both the sense and use thereof may be given so briefly as may be. And albeit he did, after much entreaty, scarcely permit these first fruits to appear in public: yet we are not afraid (being well acquainted with him) to recommend it to thy favourable acceptance; and are confident that thou wilt find in it, that measure of solidity and sweetness, joined with perspicuity and brevity, as may help thee to converse more profitably with God, speaking in his word to his church, and excite thee to bless God for him, and the pains he hath taken for thy good: we hope also that by thy acceptance hereof, he shall be encouraged to give further proof of the gift and grace of God in him, by opening more of that precious treasure; yea, and that others also may be thereby invited to put their hand to so necessary and useful a work upon the whole (or, at least, the most difficult and most profound) Scriptures, that so the Lord's people, whose callings and necessary affairs do force them to make most use of this brief way of writing, in their ordinary reading and meditation on the Scriptures, may have an easy help, ready at hand, to furnish them with matter of meditation, and direction for their uptaking and applying of the Scriptures, according as their duty and present case may require: and this, we say, without prejudice to those whose ability to buy, and leisure to read, shall suffer them to make use of other larger commentaries of holy and learned men.

But howsoever this way of brief exposition of Scripture, among other means, we humbly conceive, may prove a profitable help to propagate the knowledge of the gospel, and to vindicate the truth of the religion professed in this island, when men, even of an ordinary capacity shall see that we profess in our confession of faith nothing, but what immediately riseth from the text of Scripture, and what is very often confirmed and inculcate therein. As the Lord's stirring up of his servants to lay out their talents in this and the like way, for the good of his people, is unto us a token for good in these times of so great distemper; so the improving and making use of these means would yet further confirm all the lovers of Sion, that notwithstanding all that we have met with, yet there is hope our provoked Lord will dwell among us, and continue the course of his mercy toward this island: we say, "provoked Lord," because as it is obvious to the observation of all the godly on the one hand, with what tenderness and loving kindness the Lord doth follow his process and pleading of his controversy with his church in these islands, for our slighting of Christ, and of the offer of so rich grace in him; and how he seasoneth our sad afflictions, by continuing of the gospel preached, and by stirring up his faithful servants, especially in England, by their godly and learned writings, to strengthen all who are on the way toward him, and to reclaim others from their wanderings; so it is too manifest on the other hand how openly he is provoked by the great abuse of these mercies; and that the more we are corrected, we revolt daily more and more; for by how much more light doth break forth, men love darkness and follow it so much the more. Whence it is

that atheism, irreligion, and profanity, do every where abound, and that the Lord (justly recompensing men's wantonness of wit, love of their lusts more than of God, and their not receiving the love of the truth) hath let loose so many errors and delusions, and given up so many to be misled thereby. All which, as they ought not to be lightly looked upon, but as grievous sins, and sad punishments of sin; so they ought to stir up all those, who would approve themselves to be his hidden ones, to mourn in secret, and to stand in the gap, lest these evils come to a greater height, and ripen us for yet sadder plagues, if we do not entertain more heartily, and improve the light, while we have it, more diligently. And for our encouragement, we may be confident that the Lord, who knows how to be good to

such as seek him, in the worst of times, whatever may befall the Lord's people for a season, shall make truth still at last to triumph; and that the labours of his servants shall not be lost, nor their expectation perish for ever. We shall detain thee, Christian reader, no longer in the entry, but requesting Him from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, that he would fit and incline many more to put hand to this work, and would bless this little piece and the like means, to thy eternal welfare; we remain in him,

Thine, to serve thee in the gospel,

DAVID DICKSON,

GEORGE HUTCHESON.

From Edinburgh, June 15, 1656.

EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.



AUL having planted a church at Philippi, a city in Macedonia, Acts xvi. 12, and now understanding by their minister Epaphroditus, that they remained constant in the doctrine of the gospel, although under some hazard of seduction by false teachers, he writeth this epistle unto them; the scope whereof is to excite them unto constancy and further progress in faith and piety, (having removed the scandal which might arise from his present sufferings) chap. i.; and particularly to the study of humility and unity, chap. ii.; and to beware of false teachers, chap. iii.; after which he exhorteth them to the practice of some Christian virtues, commending them for their benevolence; and so concludeth the epistle with some salutations and his apostolical benediction, chap. iv.

CHAPTER I.

THIS chapter hath three parts. In the first whereof, (after the inscription, ver. 1, 2,) he exciteth and encourageth them to constancy and progress in faith and piety; partly by showing the good esteem which he had of them, manifested by his praying to God, and blessing him for them, ver. 3, 4, and that because of their constant good carriage since their first embracing of the gospel, ver. 5, and because of his persuasion of their perseverance, grounded on God's saving work of grace begun in them, ver. 6; the evident signs of which grace he perceived in them, ver. 7, which made him sincerely love them, ver. 8; and partly by his seeking growth in grace from God to them, ver. 9—11.

In the second part of the chapter, lest his present affliction might prove a stumbling-block in their way, he sheweth that the gospel had gained much by his sufferings already, to ver. 19; that it should have no loss, but advantage thereby in

time coming, to ver. 25; and that he was very confident that his trouble should have a happy issue, in his deliverance from imprisonment, for their future benefit, to ver. 27.

In the third part of the chapter, he exhorteth them to constancy and unity, ver. 27; and to courage under sufferings, by several arguments, unto the end of the chapter.

VER. 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

In this verse is the inscription, declaring who was the author of this epistle, together with the joint asserter of the truths contained in it, and to whom it was written.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christian sobriety doth teach us to speak sparingly of our own credit and authority, except when weighty reasons do urge thereto: for although Paul doth design himself often from his office of apostleship, when he writeth to these churches where his apostolical authority was questioned, (1 Cor. i. 1, compared with 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2,) yet here he doth it not, because these Philippians did not call his apostleship in question.

2. Unity and concord amongst ministers in giving joint testimony to the same truths, doth add a weight unto what they preach in the esteem of their hearers: for Paul joineth Timothy with himself in the inscription of the epistle, that the truths contained in it, appearing to be attested by them both, might have the more weight with the Philippians: "Paul and Timotheus."

3. Preachers of the gospel are in a special manner the servants of Christ, as being wholly dedicate, 2 Tim. ii. 4, and perpetually, Luke ix. 62, astricted to his more immediate service. As servants were of old to their masters, so were Paul and Timotheus "the servants of Jesus Christ."

4. It is abundant credit, and doth commend a man sufficiently unto those who really are Christ's, that he is known to be a servant of Jesus Christ; for Paul seeketh and expecteth to

be had in due regard for this, that he and Timotheus were "servants of Jesus Christ."

5. The whole bulk of those visible churches unto whom the apostles did write, is designed by the name of "saints;" partly because some among them, and those the better, though usually not the greater part, were really saints, and inherently holy, Rev. iii. 4, for whose cause the whole community are called "saints;" partly because it is the duty of every one within the church, and the end of their calling, to be holy, Lev. xi. 44; and partly because all and every one within the visible church are federally and externally holy, in so far as God, by entering covenant with them, hath separated them from other people, as dedicated unto him for his worship and service: and so whole Israel is said to be sanctified, Exod. xxxi. 13, and the child procreate of parents whereof one is a believer, is called "holy," to wit, by this external and federal holiness, 1 Cor. vii. 14. And thus Paul, writing here to the visible church, calleth them "saints, at Philippi."

6. As to make a man internally and spiritually holy it is necessary he be in Jesus Christ, united to him, and drawing influence from him by faith, John xv. 5; so to make a man externally holy, to be called and esteemed federally holy, as every member of the visible church is said to be holy and in Christ, requireth a visible and external union with Christ, consisting in external covenanting, and serious professing of truths relating to him; the effect of which union is the communication of common gifts, unto every one according to his measure, 1 Cor. xii. 6, &c.; for this cause the apostle here calleth all the professed Christians in Philippi "saints in Christ Jesus." See John xv. 2, which supposeth some to be in Christ, to wit, in the way presently mentioned, who yet may be found fruitless, and consequently unregenerate.

7. The dignity and parts of a minister, or of any church-officer, do not exempt him from a necessity of being taught, exhorted, reprov'd, and comforted; for Paul directeth this epistle (wherein he teacheth, exhorteth, &c.) as to the people, so to the church-officers: "to bishops and deacons."

8. The bishops mentioned in Scripture are nothing else but ordinary pastors, and overseers of particular flocks, of whom many might be and were in one city, such as Philippi; which could not have been if they had been trusted with the actual oversight of many congregations and of whole provinces, as is now alleged by those who distinguish betwixt bishops and pastors, and make them office-bearers of a higher degree in the church; for the epistle is directed to the "bishops at Philippi."

9. As the Lord Christ hath appointed some office-bearers in his house for the oversight of the souls of his people, as ministers and elders, here designed by the name of "bishops," or overseers, see Acts xx. 17, compared with ver. 28; so he hath appointed others to take inspection of their bodily necessities, that those who are indigent may be supplied by their care, and the charity of the flock, who are here called "deacons." See Acts vi. 1, &c.

VER. 2. Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from

God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

He saluteth them most Christianly, by wishing unto them "grace," that is God's favour, as the fountain; and "peace," that is peace with God, peace with their own conscience, peace one with another, and all sort of prosperity, as streams flowing from that fountain: and all this he seeketh from God through virtue of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. God's grace and favour is the root and fountain from which peace with God, with our own conscience, and all sanctified prosperity and peace among ourselves, do flow; for all those are understood here by "peace," which Paul wisheth unto them as the fruits of God's grace, joining "grace and peace."

2. In seeking things needful from God, we would look unto him, not as standing disaffected to us and at a distance from us, but according to the nearest relations which we can reckon ourselves to have unto him; so Paul eyeth God as his and their Father, reconciled through Christ: "from God our Father."

3. Whatsoever cometh from God to believers is conveyed unto them by virtue of Christ's merit, (whereby he hath purchased all things for them, Isa. liii. 5,) and of his intercession, whereby he applieth his purchase unto them, Heb. vii. 25. Whence it is that he asketh from God the Father, but "through Jesus Christ."

VER. 3. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

The apostle's scope being to excite those Philippians unto constancy and further progress in faith and piety, doth for this end wisely make known the good esteem which he had of them, in so far that whensoever they came to his remembrance, which was very frequently, and especially in prayer, he was constrained not only to pray, but to bless the Lord for them.

DOCTRINES.

1. It should be the frequent subject of a minister's thoughts to observe how the work of God doth thrive among his flock: so was it with Paul; for saying "upon every remembrance of you," it is certain he had many remembrances of them.

2. When a faithful minister seeth the people of his charge thriving by God's blessing upon his labours amongst them, it must needs be to him the matter of much joy and thanksgiving, how sad soever his case be otherwise; so the Philippians' profiting maketh Paul (though a prisoner) glad: "Making request with joy."

3. Then is our joy, for things comfortable and pleasant unto us, rightly expressed when it runs out in praises and thanksgiving unto God; for so doth Paul express his joy; "I thank my God."

4. Then will a man the more cheerfully bless the Lord for favours bestowed upon others, when he looketh upon God as reconciled to himself; for hereby Paul is helped not a little to give thanks, when he looketh upon God as his God: "I thank my God."

5. As a minister should rejoice for spiritual favours already bestowed upon his flock, so also he should pray for what is lacking [deficient]; for Paul doth both: "Making request with joy."

VER. 5. For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

He giveth reasons for his joy on their behalf; whereof the first is, their embracing the gospel, (whereby they were brought unto fellowship with Christ and his church,) and that so readily after the first preaching thereof amongst them; together with their constancy therein unto that very time.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is a real fellowship and communion which those who embrace the gospel have one with another, 1 John i. 7, and all of them with Christ, 1 John i. 3; which consisteth in those nigh relations, and the exercise of mutual duties founded upon these relations, under which one of them standeth toward another, 1 Cor. xii. 25, and all of them towards Christ, and Christ towards them, Rev. iii. 20. Hence he calleth their embracing of the gospel, "their fellowship in the gospel."

2. That a people or person doth readily assent to the call of the gospel, and remaineth constant in the profession of and obedience unto it, is matter of thanksgiving and praise unto God: for this was Paul's joy for those Philippians, "even their fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now."

3. It is not fit that any man, especially a minister, should boast much of the reality of grace in any upon a profession newly taken up, until after a time's trial it be seen how the person holdeth up in his profession, by walking equally in the latitude of duties, and constantly in variety of cases and conditions, lest haply he be afterwards ashamed of his confidence; therefore Paul doth not boast much of those Philippians, until he take some proof of them: "From the first day until now."

VER. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

A second reason of his joy, was the confidence which he had of their perseverance in grace unto the end, and of their being carried on by the same power which did begin the work of grace in them. This he speaketh unto the whole church, not as if every one in it, to his certain knowledge, in the judgment of infallible verity, had been truly gracious; but, because in the judgment of charity, (which supposeth the best, where it hath any probable appearance, and no

evidence to think otherwise,) he found it equitable to think so of all, especially, being persuaded that there were many such among them, in whom only this and the like expressions were verified, which were spoken generally unto all. (See 1 Cor. vi. 11, compared with chap. xi. 21.)

DOCTRINES.

1. They who have received grace, shall never totally lose it, but undoubtedly persevere therein to the end: for Paul is "confident of this very thing," to wit, of their perseverance.

2. The certainty of the saints' perseverance, is not grounded upon the stability of their resolutions, Psal. lxxiii. 2, nor yet upon the stability of gracious habits in themselves, Rev. iii. 2, but upon the power of God, which is engaged for their preservation against all opposition: for the ground of his confidence is, that God is engaged for the thing; "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it."

3. The work of grace is not perfected at the first, but hath its own beginnings, progress, and accomplishment at death; "He that hath begun, will perform it until the day of Christ."

4. The whole progress of this work, from the first step unto the last, is all from God, and from no power of our own free-will; "He who hath begun, will perform."

5. Albeit grace in believers will be perfected at the time of their death, Heb. xii. 23, when their soul shall be presented before Christ their Judge, and carried up to be with him; yet the complete consummation of their blessed estate in soul and body is reserved till Christ's second coming, wherein he shall raise up their bodies in an incorruptible estate, unite them to their souls, and carry up the whole man with him, to put on the copestone on that work of grace begun here: for this cause, saith he, "He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," not only of their particular judgment, but specially of his second coming.

VER. 7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

A third reason of his blessing God for them, clearing and confirming the former, is, he conceived himself bound to judge of them all as truly gracious, and such as should persevere unto the end, by reason of his hearty affection towards them; which together with his judgment of them flowing from it, was grounded upon the evident signs of grace in them, (the same grace for kind, which he himself had,) in so far, as they had in a special manner owned him and in their own sphere joined with him, both in his sufferings and actings for the defence and confirmation of the gospel.

DOCTRINES.

1. Where sincere love is among Christians, there will be a communion of prayers, praises, and of good hopes: for from this that "he had

them in his heart," he inferreth, "it was meet," or just "for him" to do all the foresaid duties for them.

2. That which knitteth the hearts of Christians in the straitest tie of mutual love, is not so much carnal respects and natural relations, 2 Cor. v. 16; as the real evidences of God's grace in the person loved: for "Paul had them in his heart," because they were "partakers of his grace."

3. Albeit no precept or practice in the whole Scripture doth evince, that visible churches are to be constituted of those only who ought to be accounted truly gracious by discerning Christians, Matt. xiii. 28—30; yet this impedeth not, but the gospel hath been so far blessed in some places, as that the whole members of some particular churches, by their godly and sober conversation, have given positive evidences of true grace in them, even to very discerning Christians; and that the gospel may have the same effects in some particular churches, is yet possible: so Paul thinks it meet to judge of them all at Philippi, as truly gracious, to wit, all who were of age; "It is meet for me to think this of you all."

4. The judgment which one Christian passeth upon the inward gracious estate of another, is not always according to the verity and truth of the thing; but it is grounded upon, and flowing from charity, which hopeth the best in things which are uncertain, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, and so may be deceived: thus Paul doth not affirm positively that they were all gracious, only it was meet for him to judge so of them, and that because of his charity and affection towards them, which did, and justly might preponderate with his judgment in the present case; "Because I have you in my heart," saith he.

5. There must be some positive, though not infallible evidences of the inward work of grace in a person, before we can warrantably pass a judgment, even from charity, upon him as truly gracious: for Paul groundeth his charity upon such evidences: "Inasmuch as both in my bonds," &c.

6. It is the part of each professor to avow, support, speak for, join with, and by all lawful means defend those who are suffering for the truth of the gospel, or employed any other way for the defence or confirmation thereof; for they were "partakers with him, both in the defence and confirmation of the gospel."

7. When a person living otherwise without offence, is zealous for the truth of God, owning those who do suffer for it, contributing his uttermost to uphold it, even when the powers of the world would bring it down, and doth not draw back for fear of any hazard; it is ground sufficient for "charity" to judge of that person, as truly gracious: for Paul thinketh it meet to judge so of those Philippians, because they owned him, "both in his bonds, and confirmation of the gospel."

VER. 8. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

He confirmeth what he spoke, ver. 7, of his

sincere love towards them, by taking God to witness, how much he was affected towards them with a truly Christian love.

DOCTRINES.

1. The most secret inclinations and motions of our inward affections, are plain and naked before God: otherwise Paul would not have appealed unto him as witness of the sincerity of his love and affection, saying, "God is my record."

2. The taking of an oath, or appealing to God the searcher of hearts, as a witness to the truth of what we affirm, is not unlawful; but in some cases a duty: for "God is my record," saith Paul.

3. Though the taking of an oath be lawful in some cases, yet not for every trivial business, but for grave and weighty causes: for here Paul doth it for a weighty cause, even to procure and facilitate this people's attention to the gospel, and to secure the success of his pains among them, as appeareth from the scope, in order to which he persuadeth them of his hearty affection: for, saith he, "God is my record, how greatly I long," &c.

4. The mutual love of Christians should not be carnal, for selfish and worldly reasons and ends only, but spiritual; a love like unto Christ's for fervency and sincerity; a love whereof Christ is the author, and having Christ's honour and the spiritual good of those who are loved for its main ground, motive, and end: for that is to love "in the bowels of Christ."

5. Christian love among Christians, doth evidence itself much in Christian fellowship, as occasion offereth: for in place of saying, "how he loved them," he saith, "how he longed for them," as desiring to evidence his love that way if he had opportunity.

VER. 9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment;

He exciteeth them yet more unto further progress, by seeking those things from God to them, wherein he would have them to advance and grow; as namely, love to God and their neighbour, together with knowledge, and the spiritual sense or tastings of God's goodness and love: for the word rendered "judgment," doth also signify spiritual sense and experimental knowledge.

DOCTRINES.

1. There can be no such measure of grace attained, but further progress ought to be endeavoured: for he prayeth that those Philippians (whose graces he hath presently commended) "may abound more and more."

2. Love unto God and our neighbour, especially unto those who are God's, is so necessary, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, so comprehensive, Matt. xxii. 37, 39; and meeteth with so many things to extinguish it, Matt. xxiv. 12; that we are not easily to be satisfied with a small measure of that grace: for he prayeth, "that their love may abound."

3. Such love and zeal are commendable and to be sought after, as have a proportional measure

of knowledge going along with them: for he prayeth here, "that their love may abound in," or, with "knowledge."

4. There is a spiritual sense and experimental knowledge, whereby we find what Scripture speaketh of God's goodness verified in ourselves: for so much is understood here by "all judgment," or sense.

5. This sense and experimental knowledge, would be sought after, as the most effectual mean to beget, entertain, and increase the love of God in those who are his: for he prayeth, that their love "may abound in," or, with "sense."

VER. 10. That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Here four ends are subjoined; for attaining whereof, he would have them abounding in the three forementioned graces: 1. That they might be endued with a spirit of discerning betwixt truth and error, right and wrong: for so the former part of ver. 10, is to be read, "that ye may try things that differ:" of which trial, "the approving of things that are excellent," (as the word is rendered in our Bibles) is the commendable effect. 2. That they might be sincere, without any mixture of sinful bias in their choice of things after trial. 3. That they might be kept from being occasions of stumbling unto other, ver. 10. And, 4. That they might abound in good works undertaken and gone about in the strength of Christ, and tending to God's glory as their main scope, ver. 11.

DOCTRINES.

1. That a Christian may be thoroughly fitted to judge of things controverted, there is more required than notional light in the brain, to wit, practice according to what he already knoweth, and some experimental knowledge and taste of divine truths in his own heart: for the apostle, "with knowledge," requireth, "abounding in love and sense," that so they "might try those things which differ." (See Heb. v. 14.)

2. Such knowledge as enableth a man to discern betwixt truth and error, right and wrong, is then worthy to be sought after, when sincerity in choosing what is right, and rejecting of what is wrong, is joined with it: for he conjoineth those two, "Ye may discern things that differ, and be sincere."

3. It should be one of our main desires, (whatsoever he wrestlings with corruption within ourselves,) that yet it may not break forth to the offence of others: so Paul prayeth, that "they may be without offence."

4. No shorter term ought to be assigned unto our growth and daily progress in holiness than the day of our death; for then, and not till then, shall grace be completed, Heb. xii. 23. Thus he prayeth they may abound more and more, "unto the day of Christ;" that is, either the day of

every man's death, so called, because of the particular sentence or judgment, which is passed by Christ upon every man immediately after death, Luke xii. 20, and xxiii. 43; or, the day of Christ's second coming, 1 Thess. v. 2. And this he will have the term-day of their endeavour to continue sincere and without offence: because the final and open acquittance of the elect from sin and misery shall be reserved until then, Matt. xxv. 33, 34.

5. It is not sufficient for Christians to walk without offence, by abstaining from what is grossly evil; but they must also set about the doing of what is good: "being filled with the fruits of righteousness."

6. It is not the doing of one good work, or of some few, which will sufficiently evidence a man to be righteous, except he aim at the constant practice of every thing which is good: for that is to be "filled with the fruits of righteousness," or with good works, whereby the sincerity of our righteousness is tried, as the tree by the fruits, Luke vi. 44, 45.

7. That a work be truly good, or a fruit of righteousness, it is necessary that the work be done by one who is in Christ by faith, and by virtue of strength drawn from Christ: for these fruits required "are by Jesus Christ," that is, by strength drawn from him: which presupposeth the person to be engrafted in him, John xv. 4.

8. It is necessary also for a good work, that the doer of it have God's glory for his main scope, and not vainglory, credit, or any by respect: otherwise he is an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself, Hos. x. 1; so they are to be "unto the glory and praise of God."

VER. 12. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

In the second part of this chapter, lest they should have stumbled at his present suffering, and feared lest thereby the gospel should have been totally extinct; he sheweth, first, that the gospel had received much advantage already by all those sad things, which had befallen him.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christ's ministers, as to forecast what may prove a stumbling-block in the way of the Lord's people, to retard them in their Christian course; so, by all means to endeavour the removal of it: thus Paul wisely foreseeeth, and carefully laboureth to remove that offence and discouragement, which Christians were apt to take from his sufferings; "But I would ye should understand," &c.

2. So wise and powerful is God in working, that what is intended by adversaries to obscure his glory, and to mar his work, he maketh it tend to the further clearing of the one, and promoting of the other; which holdeth chiefly in the sufferings of his servants for truth, whereby the Lord hath promoted the gospel frequently as much as by their preaching: so Paul's sufferings "had fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel."

3. That truth is a gainer by our saddest sufferings, is sufficient reason for contentment under them: for Paul resteth satisfied, and would have others satisfied also with this, that all his sufferings "had fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel."

4. The observing of the advantage that cometh to the gospel by the suffering of the saints for Christ's truth, serveth greatly to remove the scandal of the cross: for this end would the apostle have "them to understand that what had befallen him, was for the furtherance of the gospel."

VER. 13. So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

He giveth two evidences, that advantage had come to the gospel by his sufferings: first, his bonds, or the gospel which was the cause of his bonds, was made famous in Nero's court, and elsewhere, while as every one almost, inquiring after the cause of his sufferings, did learn somewhat of Christ and the gospel by that mean.

DOCTRINES.

1. That the gospel getteth entry in the houses of kings and great men, is a great advantage and furtherance to it: for this he reckoneth as one advantage, even that the gospel by his bonds "was manifest in all the palace."

2. An occasional report, and general fame of Christ and the gospel, may, through the blessing of God accompanying it, take some by the heart, to whom that report doth come: for by the very occasional mentioning of the gospel, as the cause of Paul's sufferings, some were made to inquire and learn so much of it, as made them fall in love with it; else he would not have thought "the manifesting of his bonds" had tended "to the furtherance of the gospel."

VER. 14. And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

A second evidence is, that contrary to the expectation of enemies, (who concluded that Paul, one of the chief apostles, being put in bonds at Rome, no minister should have the courage ever to preach again) many ministers of Jesus Christ, having heard of his constancy under sufferings, were encouraged to shake off fear, and preach Christ more boldly than ever.

DOCTRINES.

1. The gospel and glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ, is the most excellent word that ever sounded in a lost sinner's ear: therefore, it is called "the word" by way of excellency, as if there were no other word besides worthy of the name.

2. This tendeth much to the furtherance of the gospel, when preachers of it are men of courage, not fearing their own personal sufferings, if so they may get Christ advanced, and the

gospel published: for this is given as an evidence of the furtherance of the gospel, even their "speaking of the word without fear."

3. The observation of God's upholding others under sharp sufferings, should make us courageous in avowing that truth for which they suffer; as knowing God who helped them, will not be lacking to us, if we be put to suffer for the same cause; for "the brethren in the Lord waxed confident by his bonds."

4. As among all Christians, so chiefly among ministers, there is a relation of fraternity in Christ, whereby they are tied to walk as brethren: by loving one another, 1 John iv. 21; admonishing one another: Lev. xix. 17; standing for the just credit one of another, James iv. 11; and working to the hand one of another, for carrying on the work of their Lord Christ, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Hence they are called, "brethren in the Lord."

VER. 15. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

Because it might have been objected, that many of those forementioned preachers, of whom he boasted, were but naughty men, and small friends to Paul; he answereth first, granting, many indeed did preach Christ from a spirit of envy against Paul, to outstrip him, and of "contention and strife," hereby raising a sinful emulation amongst the ministry, while every one laboured who should have most to applaud him, and from a malicious purpose, and desire to procure harder usage for Paul, if not his death, being now in bonds; supposing the more the gospel was preached, Nero would be the more incensed against him: yet herein he comforteth himself, that all the preachers were not of that stamp, there being many besides them, who preached Christ from love, and good will toward Christ, and Paul his prisoner, aiming sincerely at the good of the gospel; for the defence whereof, he was now in bonds.

DOCTRINES.

1. They may preach Christ unto others, who are but hollow-hearted men themselves: for so were those who preached Christ, even of "envy and strife."

2. Such is the power of unmortified corruption, that it will make a man's most excellent gifts, and the exercise of them in the choicest duties of divine worship, subservient to his basest lusts: for "some even preached Christ out of envy and strife."

3. The Lord taketh notice, not only of the matter which ministers do preach, whether it be truth or error; but also of the manner how, the ends for which, and the motives from which they preach: even whether they preach Christ "from envy and contention, or from love and goodwill;" for here Paul taketh notice of it.

4. An immoderate sinful desire after applause, together with the lust of envy, because of the gifts and estimation of others, is a sin, whereof those who preach Christ are sometimes guilty : for here, some "preach Christ out of envy."

5. The ministers of Jesus Christ had need to resist the very first motions of the forementioned evil : seeing where it is once rooted in the heart, it will make a man prostitute his parts and gifts ; yea the very preaching of Christ, to the service of it. So those of whom the text speaketh, having once given way to a spirit of sinful emulation against Paul, they rest not, until they even "preach Christ out of envy."

6. Where there are self-seeking men in the ministry, making a trade of their excellent preaching and other exercises of their gifts and parts, (mainly to get themselves much thought of, and others villipended,) unity cannot long continue in the church of Christ : but such spirits, before they fail of their intent, will rather trample upon the church's peace : for those two are conjoined, they preached Christ "out of envy and strife."

7. Though a man preach truth, and exalt Christ in preaching truth, yet if he do it from a spirit of envy, to get others decried, and himself extolled, he is but an insincere, rotten-hearted hypocrite (notwithstanding of all his preaching) in God's sight : for those men preached truth, else Paul (ver. 18,) would not have rejoiced in their preaching ; yet, seeing they preached of envy, they are spoken of as insincere, and unfaithful preachers, who preached "not sincerely."

8. Envy, and sinful emulation, because of the parts and esteem of others, is a cruel and insatiable lust, thirsting after the very blood of those against whom they have emulation : for those men who envied Paul, would gladly "have added affliction to his bonds," and have stirred up Nero, by occasion of their preaching, to have taken his life.

9. Though some that preach Christ are but hollow-hearted men, yet all are not so ; and the sincerity of those that are honest, is sufficient comfort against those discouragements which might arise from those who are otherwise : for though some preached Christ out of "envy," yet Paul comforted himself in this, that others "preached of good-will."

10. This is praiseworthy in a minister, when, he is stirred up to preach from love to truth, good-will to the work, and to Christ whose work it is, endeavouring what in him lieth to encourage all, even the meanest who have their hand at the work : for that is here commended, even to "preach Christ of good-will and love," to wit, love to Christ, to truth, and unto Paul.

11. An honest heart will respect those much, whom love to truth hath brought to any suffering or hardship : for therefore did those honest ministers preach from good will unto Paul, "knowing he was set," or "did lie," to wit, in prison, "for the defence of the gospel."

12. The sufferings of the saints for the gospel are real preachings, and are speaking apologies and defences for the power and truth of the gospel : "I am set," saith Paul, "for an apology of the gospel," as the word is in the original.

VER. 18. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached ; and I therein do rejoice,

He giveth a second answer unto that which might have been objected, to wit, whatever they aimed at in their preaching, yet Jesus Christ was made known by them : and this made him glad.

DOCTRINES.

1. The blessing of the word preached doth not depend upon the honesty and saving grace of the preacher : a graceless minister may (through God's blessing upon his own truth) be an instrument of much good unto others : for they who preached Christ in "pretence" only, pretending love to Christ, but really seeking their own applause, were surely doing good unto some ; else Paul would never have "rejoiced" so much that "Christ was preached by them."

2. The apparent diminution of our own esteem and credit ought not to be much regarded, if high esteem of Christ be upon the growing hand : Paul regarded it not ; "notwithstanding," saith he, that is, though they seek to overshadow me, "yet Christ is preached, and I rejoice."

3. The man whose heart is inflamed with love to Christ's honour, and the salvation of lost sinners, so as not to value his own particular hazard, being put in the balance with those, may expect to find much joy and comfort under his saddest sufferings : for Paul being thus disposed, rejoiceth though in bonds : "I therein do rejoice."

VER. 18. Yea, and will rejoice.

19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

That he may yet further prevent their stumbling at his sufferings he sheweth, that, as the gospel had gained much thereby already, it should gain yet more ; and that his joy in that respect should not be taken from him ; and that, because he knew, partly from Scripture, and partly also, as it appeareth, from special revelation, that this, to wit, all the machinations of his adversaries against him, should be so ordered of God, as that by the renewed supply of furniture from the Spirit of Christ, obtained by their prayers, his salvation should be advanced by them : where by "salvation" we understand, not only his eternal well-being, but his constancy also in avowing truth, and the preservation of his temporal life for the time, as he cleareth afterwards : the contrary of both which was aimed at by his envious brethren, their design being, as it seemeth, either to drive him, through his own fear, unto apostasy from Christ, or otherwise to incite Nero to put him to death.

DOCTRINES.

1. A suffering Christian, especially a preacher, may attain not only to present sweetness and joy under a bitter cross ; but also to a sweet strong persuasion of the continuance of that joy in the time to come : for Paul not only rejoiceth in the

mean time, but also confidently resolveth, "I will rejoice."

2. The joy of a Christian under a cross is grounded, not only upon good presently enjoyed and felt, but also upon that which by faith is apprehended as yet to come; so Paul rejoiceth, and promiseth to rejoice, because he knew by faith, that "this should turn to his salvation."

3. So powerful and wise is God in working, that out of the eater he can bring meat, by ordering our sad afflictions so, that our salvation, both temporal and eternal, shall be advanced thereby: thus was it with Paul; "I know that this shall turn to my salvation."

4. That Christians are kept constant under sad sufferings, and made to advance in the way towards salvation thereby, proceedeth neither from the nature of the cross, nor yet merely from the power of inherent grace; but chiefly from the actual influence and renewed supply of furniture from the Spirit of Christ: for that this did turn to his salvation, was, "through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

5. Prayer conscientiously gone about, is an excellent mean for drawing from God through Christ the choicest of his mercies, not only to ourselves, but also to others, for whom we pray: so, "through the prayer" of those Philippians, "supply from Christ" was to be communicated to Paul.

6. They who pray best and most spiritually, are not most taken up with the conceit of their own prayers: for Paul imputeth his receipts more to their prayers, than to his own; though none will question but he prayed as much, and as well as any of them: "Through your prayers," saith he.

VER. 20. According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

Paul's envious adversaries aimed at two things; either to drive him to apostasy, or to incite Nero to take his life; and in the preceding verse it is shown, that Paul knew they should be disappointed in both these: now he explaineth his knowledge and persuasion of their disappointment in the first, and sheweth the ground of that persuasion. His persuasion had two parts; the negative part is, no terror of flesh should ever make him deny the truth as a man ashamed of it. The positive is, that he should continue in the stout avowing of truth, and magnifying of Christ, whether he died or lived: the grounds of this his persuasion were, hope in God's word, his earnest expectation, flowing from his hope and by past experience.

DOCTRINES.

1. To turn our back upon truth for eschewing of suffering, saith as much as that we are ashamed of Christ and his truth: and therefore they who do so, may expect that Christ will be

ashamed of them. See Luke ix. 26, hence in place of saying, he will not deny truth in any thing, he saith, "in nothing I will be ashamed."

2. Christians in the case of trial especially, would be very strict and precise, so as not to recede from the least point of truth or duty. Thus the apostle resolveth, "I will be ashamed in nothing."

3. The first step towards defection is, a declining of, and relenting in the professing and bold avowing of truth when God calleth us to it: and to avow truth boldly as occasion offereth, is a sovereign mean to keep us from being ashamed of it. For Paul opposeth those two, his being ashamed of truth, and his bold avowing of it; the latter as preventive of the former: "In nothing I will be ashamed, but that with all boldness."

4. The avowing of truth boldly under persecution, tendeth much to the magnifying of Christ his truth, for which we suffer; and his strength which beareth us up under sufferings, being thereby much commended: hence he calleth his boldness for truth, under his bodily sufferings, a magnifying of Christ; "So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body."

5. A Christian is not to hesitate much in the matter of his death or life, if so he may get Christ magnified by either of them; for Paul standeth not much, if so "Christ be magnified, whether it be by death or life."

6. The hope of a Christian, having a word of promise for its ground (Psa. cxxx. 5,) shall never be disappointed; for Paul concludeth all this should turn to his salvation, and that he should be carried through under sufferings, because there being a general word of promise for it, Rom. viii. 28, he hoped in that word; "According to my hope," saith he.

7. Then is our hope of the right stamp and truly Christian, when being founded upon the word, it exciteth the heart earnestly, and by all lawful means to pursue after the thing hoped for; so the apostle's hope is joined with earnest expectation: the word signifieth, the expectation of a thing with head and neck stretched out, as pressing to be at it.

8. The frequent experience of God's being nigh unto us, and honouring of himself by us in former trials, is a ground for hope to rest upon, that he will not leave us in the present strait; so Paul gathereth present confidence from former experience: "That as always, so now also," &c.

VER. 21. For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

He giveth a reason of his indifferency, whether to die or to live, of which he spake, ver. 20, to wit, if his life be prolonged, "unto him to live is Christ;" that is, Christ was to be the scope of his life, he having destined it wholly to his service; but if he die, death should be gain and advantage to him.

DOCTRINES.

1. Then, and in no other case, is poor silly life worth the having, when the extolling of

Christ is the main scope at which we aim in our life; for this maketh Paul indifferent to live, or not to weary of life: "for unto me to live is Christ," saith he.

2. Whoever hath dedicated his life to get Christ exalted by it, will find death itself to be great gain and advantage, as being thereby freed from sin and misery, Rev. xiv. 13, and admitted unto the full enjoying of Christ, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, unto all eternity, 1 Thess. iv. 17; for unto Paul "to die is gain;" because "unto him to live" was Christ.

VER. 22. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose, I wot not.

He explaineth the first member of the preceding verse, showing, if he should live any longer in this corruptible flesh, this, or that life should be the fruit of his labour, that is, the gaining of souls to God by his labour should be the scope of his life: and then declareth his former indifferency to be such, that he knew not whether to choose death or life, though it were given him to his option.

DOCTRINES.

1. The manifold infirmities accompanying this mortal fading life do not impede the labour of God's faithful servants from being fruitful, in order to the honour of Christ and good of the church; the wisdom of God judging it most convenient to commit this heavenly treasure to earthly vessels, and to bring about the great work of saving of souls, not by sinless, holy, and uncorruptible angels, but by poor weak men, who carry about fading flesh as ourselves, 2 Cor. iv. 7. So if Paul had lived in the flesh, his labours should have had fruit that way: "If I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour."

2. Whoever knoweth ought of a life to come, and of a right unto it, cannot but speak contemptibly of the life which now is, while he compareth the one with the other; so Paul as contemning this life, being compared with that, calleth it a "living in the flesh."

3. A man may be so persuaded of a life of glory after death upon the one hand, and so convinced of the great advantage which may come to the church by the prolonging of his life, upon the other hand, that if to die or live were given to his wish, he could not easily determine himself, which of them to choose: so is it with Paul; "What I shall choose, I wot not," saith he.

VER. 23. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better

24. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

He professeth his strait, showing there were weighty reasons on both sides: when he looked on death, therein he saw his own particular advantage, even to be still with Christ; when he

looked upon life, therein he saw advantage to the church, and hence ariseth his strait what to choose, or refuse.

DOCTRINES.

1. Death is not a destruction of the godly, but a separating of the soul from the body, a flitting from one place to another, a releasing of the soul from the captivity of the body, wherein it was enclosed, and a setting of it at liberty: for Paul maketh use of a word to express death, rendered here to depart, which signifieth to dissolve things before conjoined, to change our abode, or our dwelling, to set sail for another country, and to be released from prison.

2. It is lawful, yea, and in some respects a duty for Christians, not only frequently to think upon death, but also to long after it; for, "Paul hath a desire to depart."

3. Then is our longing after death commendable, when it proceedeth not from desperation, or wearying of the cross which God hath laid on, Jonah iv. 3, 4, but from a desire to be with Christ: for here those are conjoined, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ."

4. The souls of men and women are not annihilated after death, neither do they sleep until the resurrection, nor are they detained by the way from immediate passing into glory, if they have been believers, as the souls of others do enter into everlasting condemnation: for Paul knew nothing of a purgatory after death; but he expected presently "to be with Christ."

5. There is no proportion betwixt the choicest contentments (even those that are spiritual) which can be attained here, and that exceeding weight of glory which the saints shall enjoy hereafter, the latter doth so far exceed the former: for, "to be with Christ," saith Paul, "is far better."

6. Though Christ be present with, and dwell in the hearts of believers by faith, even while they are here, Eph. iii. 17, yet all that presence and nearness is but a distance and kind of absence being compared with that measure of nearness to, and presence with him, which shall be enjoyed hereafter: the former being but mediate, through the glass of ordinances, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; frequently interrupted, Psal. xxx. 7, and no ways full, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But the latter shall be immediate, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; constant, 1 Thess. iv. 17, and so full, that they who shall enjoy the meanest degree, will find no inlack [defect], Psal. xvii. 15; for he saith after his departure, "he will be with Christ," as if he had never enjoyed his presence until then.

7. The church of Christ hath much advantage by enjoying of faithful ministers, and suffereth much by their removal; for "my abiding in the flesh is needful for you," saith Paul.

8. It is only the public good of the church, and others of whom we have charge, and not particular contentment which can be enjoyed here, that ought to cast the balance of our affections towards a desire of having our life prolonged: for only this hath weight with Paul, while he saith, "to abide is more needful for you."

VER. 25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26. That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.

Having shown (ver. 20, &c.) that his adversaries should be disappointed of what they aimed at in the first place, which was to drive him unto apostasy; he sheweth here they should be also disappointed of what they designed in the next place, which was the inciting of Nero to take away his life: for, from what he hath presently said, how useful the continuance of his life should be to the church of Christ, and withal having probably a special revelation of the thing, he expresseth at least his confidence (if not his certain persuasion) that not only his life for this time should be preserved, but also that being set at liberty, he should come and remain with them; and all this that they might be further promoted in the way to heaven, especially in the grace of believing, ver. 25; and having more abundant matter of gloriation in Christ, having received a new proof of his power, and good will in delivering of Paul from death, and sending him unto them, ver. 26.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord in mercy often prolongeth the life of useful instruments, and keepeth them from heaven the longer, that the church may reap advantage by their labours: so Paul "was to abide and continue with them all."

2. A faithful minister, though he be not tied to submit to the loss of heaven and salvation, yet he ought contentedly to spare the enjoyment of it for a time, if so be his life may do good to the church of God: for Paul is content upon this account that his life be prolonged: "Having this confidence, I know I shall abide."

3. God always can, and sometimes doth so calm the rage of persecutors, that they do not execute the evil by them intended against his servants, whom he still preserveth and doth deliver from death and bonds, so long as he hath work for them: for, saith Paul, "having this confidence, I know," &c. His confidence that he should be delivered, doth import that God may deliver when he pleaseth, and that at least, considering the present posture of affairs, it was very probable that he should be delivered: if it do not also import a certainty of faith grounded upon some particular revelation that it should be so: for the word most frequently signifieth an assured confidence. See 2 Tim. iv. 16—18. Where Paul doth seem to insinuate that after his first captivity and compearance before Nero, he was set at liberty and did preach the gospel among the Gentiles; though he was afterward apprehended and put to death.

4. They who have received a great measure of gifts and graces, and have the opportunity of enjoying the fellowship of others, should improve their time and parts, in their place and station, for the spiritual advantage of those with whom they converse: for so doth Paul look on his con-

tinuance with them, that it should be for "their furtherance."

5. As there is no grace wherein Christians ought not to aim at progress and growth, 2 Pet. iii. 18, so especially they would labour to grow in faith, as being that grace, which by its growth is cause of growth in all other graces; it is the mouth which sucketh the milk of the promises; and therefore Satan obstructeth our growth in that grace most, Luke xxii. 31, 32. Hence the apostle would aim at their growing in this grace especially: "For your furtherance and joy of faith," saith he.

6. As there is a joy of sense, John xvi. 24, so there is a joy arising from the solid satisfaction which the heart doth receive from laying hold on Christ and the promise, Psa. lx. 6, which is here called the "joy of faith."

7. The several instances of Christ's kything [displaying] his power and good-will in the delivery of his church, or of any particular member thereof from a desperate strait, should be improved for strengthening of our faith, and increase of holy boasting and gloriation in God: for Paul sheweth the fruit of his deliverance "should be the furtherance of their faith," and that their "rejoicing might be more abundantly in Jesus Christ for him;" that is, because of Christ's power and good-will to them, manifested in his delivery.

8. Where there is sympathy with Christian sufferers under their cross, there will be a sharing with them also in all the choice advantages which are to be obtained by their delivery: for the Philippians did partake with Paul in his bonds, (v. 7,) and as a fruit hereof, they are to reap much spiritual advantage by his delivery from them: "That your rejoicing may be more abundant," &c., saith he.

9. The more unexpected mercies are before they come, the more of God will be seen in them, and the more of joy in God will be because of them when they come; for Paul was a gone man in human appearance, being prisoner at Rome, and his delivery almost hopeless, and therefore their "rejoicing" was to be the "more abundant in Jesus Christ by his coming to them again."

VER. 27. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel;

In the third part of the chapter, he exhorteth them, that whatsoever should befall him, they would mind their duty, by living like the gospel: which general exhortation he brancheth forth in two branches: first, that they would maintain truth with perfect unity among themselves in the joint defence of it; which should be great matter of joy unto him, whether he should come and see it, or only hear of it, being absent.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is nothing concerneth Christians wherewith they should be taken up so much, as

how to beautify the gospel which they profess, by a holy conversation suitable unto it: for this is the only thing he would have them minding; and that more than any thing which concerned him; "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel."

2. As there is nothing which gladdeth a faithful minister more than the holy life of those that are committed unto his charge, so the joy and contentment of an honest minister should be conscientiously sought after by the people: for he useth this as an argument to incite them to walk as becometh the gospel, that his hearing or seeing of it would make him glad, "that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs:" which words do not necessarily import his doubtfulness of his coming, contrary to what he seemeth to speak, ver. 25, he only hereby sheweth, first, that they were not so much to be taken up with that, whether he came or not, as with their own duty. Secondly, how much their living like the gospel would refresh him, so that although he should be deprived of that comfort which he was confident to enjoy in their fellowship, yet to hear of their Christian conversation would refresh his spirit under that want.

3. This is one part of a conversation becoming the gospel, to be zealous for truth, standing to, and striving for the defence thereof against error, and instability in truth, which reflect as much on the gospel as profanity of life; for Paul explaineth this conversation, which becometh the gospel by "a standing fast, and striving for the faith of the gospel," that is, for the doctrine of faith held forth in the gospel.

4. It concerneth God's people much, to be thoroughly one among themselves in this conflict for truth against error: therefore doth he press them so much to be one, while he saith, "that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together;" where every word expresseth a part of this unity, to wit, union in spirit, or judgment and opinion; union in mind or affection; and union in design and endeavour, while they "strive together."

VER. 28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

The second branch of living like the gospel (which also explaineth the first) is a spirit of courage under sufferings from the enemies of truth, which he presseth from the consideration of two things, which they might read in their courageous sufferings, to wit, namely, that their so doing portended destruction to enemies, and salvation to themselves.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the people of God have always some to be their adversaries for truth; so they may attain to such a high pitch of courage, that the utmost of adversaries' malice and rage will not terrify them, to wit, so as to drive them from their duty, or to make them take any sinful course for their own safety, Neh. vi. 11. Therefore are they

exhorted to it, as a thing attainable, that they be "in nothing terrified."

2. Faithless fears and faintings of spirit, because of the boasts and threats of adversaries, are exceedingly unsuitable for those who live under the gospel: for this is one part of that conversation which becometh the gospel, to be "in nothing terrified by adversaries."

3. The more of sufferings for truth the people of God are made to undergo, and the more there be of Christian courage, and holy contempt of enemies' rage and boasts under sufferings, there is the more evidence of delivery unto the church, and of ruin here and hereafter to her enemies, "which is to them an evident token of perdition."

4. Christian courage under sufferings for Christ and his truth (which always presupposeth faith in Christ, ver. 29,) though it be not meritorious of heaven; yet it evidenceth our right unto it: "but to you of salvation."

5. It is of God's free grace, and from his special disposing, that crosses and sufferings for truth (which in themselves look like displeasure and wrath from the Lord) should contribute any thing unto the salvation of the sufferer, or be a promising evidence of it: this much is meant by the last words, "and that of God."

VER. 29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Here is another argument, exciting them unto Christian courage under sufferings for truth, to wit, that nothing was required of them, but what was given unto them: for as grace to believe in Christ, so grace to suffer courageously for Christ, was a part of Christ's purchase for them, and for his sake to be gifted over unto them.

DOCTRINES.

1. To believe in Jesus Christ, or to suffer christianly for him, goeth beyond the reach of natural strength. It is an honourable gift, and that freely given; "For it is given unto you to believe, and suffer," saith he.

2. All favours, especially saving graces, are given unto us in behalf of Christ, as being purchased for us by his merit, Isa. liii. 5, and applied unto us through virtue of his intercession, Heb. vii. 25, for "it is given in behalf of Christ."

3. Faith in Christ must go before Christian suffering for Christ; so that to suffer for him is of greater importance, and in some respects more honourable than simply to believe in him; for he not only saith, "it is given to believe," in the first place, and then "to suffer;" but there is a gradation in his speech from the less to the more, "not only to believe, but also to suffer."

4. This may encourage very cowards to be stout under Christian sufferings, that grace to suffer, and all things necessary to make us suffer aright, are purchased unto our hand, and freely given unto us in behalf of Christ: for this is the force of the argument contained in this verse: "For unto you it is given," &c.

5. Then are sufferings truly Christian, and an evidence of salvation, when as the sufferer is

first a believer, so his sufferings are for Christ's sake, that is, for his truth, as the cause for which, 1 Pet. iii. 14; and from love to him, as the motive from which they suffer, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. "For his sake."

VER. 30. Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

He giveth a third reason to enforce the same duty, to wit, that their sharpest sufferings would put them in no other condition than that wherein he himself was, as partly they saw when he was at Philippi, (see Acts xvi. 19, &c.,) and partly they had heard by the relation of others since.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christian courage under sufferings for truth will not be kept up without a battle and conflict; what from a fainting discouraged spirit within, Heb. xii. 12, what from the rage of persecutors, Acts ix. 1, and God's hiding of his face without, Psa. xlv. 24. So Paul, speaking of his sufferings, calleth them an "agony," or "conflict:" "Having the same conflict."

2. The Lord may for wise reasons leave his most precious servants to wrestle under a suffering case for a long time together; for Paul was a sufferer at Philippi, and continueth to be so when he is at Rome a long time after that: "What ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

3. This may add no small encouragement under sufferings for truth, that nothing befalleth us but what is common to men; yea, to the chiefest of Christ's servants and ministers: for this is Paul's scope to encourage those Philippians, because he himself was in the same case with them: "Having the same conflict, which ye now hear to be in me."

CHAPTER II.

IN the first part of this chapter, the apostle exhorteth them with much vehemency, to union and humility, ver. 1, 2; and dissuadeth from contention and vainglory, ver. 3, and self-love, ver. 4. First, from Christ's example, ver. 5, whose divine glory before his incarnation is set forth, ver. 6; his incarnation and state of humiliation, ver. 7, 8; and his exaltation, ver. 9—11. Secondly, from their by-past obedience, ver. 12, 13; after which he repeateth the debortation, ver. 14, enforcing it from the advantages which were to follow, ver. 15, 16, the last whereof, to wit, his joy, ought in reason to have much weight with them, ver. 17, 18.

In the second part he comforteth them; first, by a promise of sending Timotheus, ver. 19, whom he commendeth unto them, to ver. 24. Secondly, by the expression of his hope, that he himself should see them shortly, ver. 24. And, thirdly, by sending their own minister Epaphroditus unto them presently, ver. 25, and that upon several weighty reasons, ver. 26—28, from which he exhorteth them to receive him with all due respect, ver. 29, and because he had with great pains attended him at their direction, ver. 30.

VER. 1. If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2. Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

The apostle, being to press unity and love, useth a most vehement exhortation, and a kind of rhetorical adjuration, that if they had ever found by the means of his ministry, or did expect to find, any of those consolations, which are to be had in Christ: if they had ever enjoyed, or expected to enjoy, any comfort of mutual love and concord among themselves; if they had ever found any fellowship with God, by communication of influence from his Spirit, if they would not mar that fellowship for the time to come; if they had any pity or compassion upon him a prisoner for Christ; he obtesteth them by all those, and as they would give proof of all those, so they would complete the begun joy which he had in them, by their unity and concord among themselves, which he setteth forth in four diverse expressions, to be distinguished thus. The first, "that ye be like-minded," signifieth in general their unity in judgment, love, affection, and action; which is subdivided in the three particulars following. The second, "having the same love," expresseth unity of will and mutual affections. The third, unity of design and endeavours. The fourth, unity in judgment and opinion.

DOCTRINES.

1. The most famous and praiseworthy churches have their own failings and infirmities; so this church, though highly commended, chap. i., yet hath had their own differences and alienation of minds, rending of affections, and carnal emulations flowing from their differences, as appeareth from this vehement exhortation to concord and unity.

2. As unity and concord is necessary in itself, and at all times; (hence the apostle doth so earnestly press them unto it;) so it is most necessary and comfortable, especially in suffering times; therefore the apostle, having spoken in the close of the former chapter, of those sufferings which they were to undergo for Christ and truth, inferreth as a conclusion from thence this exhortation unto unity, "If there be therefore," &c.

3. As they who have received any spiritual good from Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the word, ought to have those in high respect whom the Lord hath made instrumental for their good; and to evidence that respect unto them, chiefly, when they are in a suffering case; so the servants of Jesus Christ ought to improve any personal respect or weight which they have with people, for working of them up towards that wherein their spiritual good doth consist: for Paul obtesteth them by all that good, for the working whereof in them his ministry had been instrumental, as also by that compassionate and

tender respect which they did owe unto him, being now in bonds, that they would tender his joy and comfort; and chiefly that they would evidence their respect unto him by seeking after unity and concord, which was more for their own good than his; and is here mainly pressed after by him, the fulfilling of his joy being sought after only as a mean to that end, and as an argument to persuade the thing pressed: "If there be any consolation in Christ," &c., "if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded," saith he.

4. So necessary is unity and concord among the people of God, that the enjoyment of Christ's presence, and of spiritual consolation flowing from it; the reaping of any spiritual advantage, by the communion and love of the saints; the entertaining of fellowship with God through the operation of his Spirit in us, do in a great part depend upon it: our own differences, carnal emulations, rending of affections, cross and contrary actings, do in a great measure obstruct all those, by making Christ withdraw his presence, 2 Cor. xiii. 11, and one of us coldfire [inanimate] and useless unto another, Gal. v. 15, and by grieving the Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30, compared with 31. Hence the apostle obtesteth them by all those, that they would fulfil his joy by being one among themselves, and so insinuateth a necessary connexion betwixt their unity and enjoying of these things, while he saith, "If there be therefore," &c., ver. 1, "fulfil ye my joy, in being like-minded," ver. 2.

5. The utmost endeavours of men and devils to sad the hearts of Christ's faithful servants, cannot altogether mar their joy; "Fulfil ye my joy," saith he; which importeth he had some joy already.

6. The success of the gospel among the churches of Christ will be matter of joy unto a public spirited Christian, even in the midst of all his particular crosses and sufferings; for the fruits of the gospel among these Philippians, spoken of chap. i., gave occasion to this begun joy unto Paul amidst his personal sufferings, which he doth here obtest them to fulfil; "Fulfil ye my joy."

7. However a church do otherwise flourish in gifts, graces, and all kind of sympathy with Christian sufferers, (as this church did, chap. i. 6, 7,) yet so long as they live in strife and contention among themselves, they give not so much matter of joy unto a true lover of Jesus Christ by the former, but they give as much matter of grief by the latter; hence he bids them "fulfil his joy, by being like-minded." There would be always a mixture of sadness, and defect in his joy, notwithstanding the many good things which they already had, if this were not.

8. That unity and concord among societies, and especially among the churches of Christ, may be solid and lasting, there would be an union of will and affections, without laying them out on contrary and cross objects; an union of designs and endeavours, without mutual counterminings, which followeth upon the former; and there would be an union in opinion and matter of judgment, as the fountain of the other

two: this is it he presseth, first generally, "being like-minded;" and then particularly in the other three expressions, "having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

VER. 3. *Let* nothing be *done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

He dissuadeth them from two vices destructive to unity, to wit, contention, and vainglory, and exhorteth them to humility or lowliness of mind, a grace whereby a man thinketh meanly of himself, and highly of others.

DOCTRINES.

1. A contentious spirit, which maketh it a man's element to differ from others, and to carry on his point, by out-wearying of others with jangling and strife, is a notable unfriend to unity, and so to be eschewed by all who would be esteemed lovers of peace. Hence having exhorted them to union, he dehortheth from "doing any thing through strife."

2. The lust of vainglory (whereby a man pursueth more after applause from men to himself, John xii. 43, and to be esteemed of above others, 3 John 9, than the honour of God, or to be approved of him,) is the mother of contention and strife, and a great unfriend to union and peace; it being a lust which carrieth along with it a spirit which will not cede to truth, John v. 44, together with an evident contempt of all others, being compared with the man himself, who is tainted with this evil, 2 Chron. xviii. 23. Hence he forbids acting from a principle of vainglory, as they would eschew strife, and so entertain union and peace; "Let nothing be done through vainglory."

3. So ordinary is it for God to plague self-seeking spirits with disappointment, Luke xiv. 11, so inconstant and changeable is popular applause, John xii. 13, compared with chap. xix. 15, and so little is there in any man to be puffed up with, 1 Cor. iv. 7, that all glory of this kind is but "vainglory," or but empty glory, as the word in the original doth bear.

4. The grace of humility doth not consist in an affected strain of words and gestures, Matt. vi. 16, but being seated in the heart, it maketh a man think meanly of himself, or of any thing that is his; thus the word signifieth, and is here rendered, "lowliness of mind."

5. Where this grace of humility is, it contributeth much for unity and peace, and is inconsistent with a carrying on of our point from a principle of vainglory, or through strife; for he prescribeth humility as an antidote against those evils, and a sovereign mean for attaining unto and entertaining of union and peace, but "through lowliness of mind," &c.

6. So conscious should we be of our own infirmities, 1 Tim. i. 15, so modest in the esteem of our own graces and virtues, Rom. xii. 3, so far from prying into or aggreging [aggravating] the infirmities of others, Prov. x. 12, so much should we esteem of their known graces and virtues, Acts xv. 8, and so prone in charity to

believe there may be much more good in them than what appeareth, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, that we ought to esteem any other for what we know of him, to be better than ourselves; for "let each esteem others better than themselves," saith he.

7. Where Christians are of the fore-mentioned temper, it speaketh true humility, and contributeth much for union and peace; for the apostle, having enjoined "lowliness of mind" in order to unity, enjoineth the practice thereof in these terms, "let each esteem others better than themselves."

VER. 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

He dehortheth from a third vice destructive also of union and peace, to wit, self-love, whereby we regard only our own honour and profit, wholly neglecting the concerns of others; he exhortheth also to the contrary virtue.

DOCTRINES.

1. Self-love, or respect to our own things only, being joined with contempt and misregard of the interest of others, is a great enemy to union and peace; for while he presseth unity, he dehortheth from self-love; "looking not every man to his own things."

2. The procuring, maintaining, and advancing of our neighbour's good estate, in his profit, honour, fame, and all spiritual blessings, should be aimed at and endeavoured by us with the same accuracy and diligence which we use in reference to ourselves; and where Christians are of this temper, it contributeth much for union and peace; for these are "the things of others," which he exhortheth every man "also to look unto," or accurately aim at, as one shooting at a mark; for so the word beareth.

3. A Christian is so to look upon the concerns of others, as not to neglect those things which concern himself; for he commandeth, "look also on the things of others;" also or jointly with your own things.

VER. 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

The apostle presseth all the before-mentioned virtues from Christ's example, which he propoundeth here in general for their imitation.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christ's example in those things which concern our duty, is a most excellent, Matt. xi. 29, unerring, 1 Cor. xi. 1, and effectual pattern, 2 Cor. iii. 8, to be imitated by those who profess themselves to be his; "Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

2. This should commend a grace or virtue unto us, and make it lovely, that Jesus Christ by his practice hath given to us a pattern of it; for the apostle presseth these virtues, because they were eminently to be seen in Christ; "Let the same mind be in you," &c.

3. Exemplary humility, tender respect to the concerns of believers, with a most earnest desire after the church's peace, both with God

and amongst believers themselves, were eminently to be seen in Christ; for he saith, "this mind" (to wit, that humble, loving, uniting, and modest mind, whereof he spoke in the preceding verses,) "was also in Christ."

VER. 6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He enlargeth and explicateth the example proposed, to this sense, that Jesus Christ, before his incarnation, being true God, clothed with divine majesty, and so in all things equal with God the Father, ver. 6, did nevertheless hide his glory, assuming to himself the nature of man, with all the sinless infirmities thereof: so that, sin only excepted, he was in all things like unto other men, ver. 7, and being thus incarnate, and found by all who conversed with him, to have all the true properties of a real man, he voluntarily submitted himself to undergo whatsoever was enjoined him by the Father, as necessary for the redemption of mankind; in which obedience to the Father, he persevered even to the death; and in end did crown it by undergoing the cursed death of the cross, ver. 8. Now, Christ did undergo all this for our good, and the making up of our peace with God, and one with another in God; so here is in Christ great humility and condescension, and such respect unto the good of others, that in some sense he did prefer them unto himself, together with a most earnest desire after the church's peace, which are the virtues pressed from Christ's example by the apostle upon these Philippians.

DOCTRINES.

1. Jesus Christ had a being or subsistence before his incarnation; "who being," or subsisting, which is spoken of him before his incarnation.

2. That being and subsistence which he then had was truly divine; he was from all eternity true God, adorned with divine glory, splendour, and majesty, see Prov. viii. 22, 23, &c. "Who being in the form of God," by which of necessity must be understood the substantial form, or very divine essence, as clothed with divine glory and majesty, there being no accidents in God.

3. Jesus Christ is God equal with the Father, having the same divine essence; for the divine names, divine properties, works, and worship, are ascribed unto him, see 1 John i. 20, John ii. 24; vi. 40; and v. 23. Thus he is said to "be equal with God."

4. The divine essence, glory, and majesty, which Scripture doth ascribe unto Christ, do justly and naturally belong unto him, and is not usurped by him; for "it is no robbery for him to be equal with God."

5. The Father and the Son are one only God, it

being impossible there should be two Gods, or any thing equal with God, which is not God himself; now Christ is "equal with God."

6. Jesus Christ, though having still the same divine essence with the Father, yet was always a distinct person from him, even the second Person of the blessed Trinity, (see 1 John v. 7;) for equality is only in those things which in some respect are distinct; and "he is equal with God."

7. Then is one's abasement a virtue, and worthy to be imitated, when it is voluntarily undertaken for the glory of God and the good of others, and not when it is constrained, or only imposed upon us, as a just punishment for our self-exalting, or any other sin; Christ's humility propounded here for our imitation was such as is imported in the sense and scope of these words, "he thought it no robbery to be equal with God:" the drift whereof is, to show that Christ, knowing himself to be the true God, and not to have usurped that divine honour, did willingly undergo that low condition, and was not constrained to it as a punishment for usurping upon that which was not his own by right, as the devils were thrown down from heaven, because, as is commonly conceived, they would by robbery have usurped divine honour, or to be equal with God.

8. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in the fulness of time became man, and was incarnate; for so is meant by his "becoming of no reputation," and "taking on him the form of a servant."

9. It was Jesus Christ, the second Person in the Godhead, who did take on him the nature of man, and was incarnate, and not the Father or the Holy Spirit; for it is Jesus Christ here spoken of, "who took on him the form of a servant." (See Rom. i. 3.)

10. Jesus Christ, by his incarnation and assuming the nature of man, did empty himself of that divine glory, splendour, and majesty, which before he had; not by ceasing to be what he was, but by assuming something to himself, which before he was not, to wit, the human nature: in which respect, as being now God-man Mediator, he is less than the Father, John xiv. 28, under the infirmity of which nature, he did hide for a time his divine glory, so that very little of it did appear, and to some few only, Isa. liii. 2, "he became of no reputation." In the Greek, it is, he emptied himself.

11. Such was the love of Christ unto lost sinners, John xv. 13; and to the glory of his own and his Father's mercy, to be manifested in their salvation, John xvii. 4; that willingly and of his own accord, without any constraint (except that of love) he laid aside his glory, and became low and empty for their good: for "he made himself of no reputation."

12. Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Godhead, did assume to himself the true and real nature of man, having the same essential properties with the natures of other men: for "he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" which "likeness" denoteth, not only a similitude in outward show and appearance, but in the very essential parts. (See Gen. v. 3.)

13. Christ assumed to himself the human nature, not as it shall be in glory, perfectly glorified; but as clothed with sinless infirmities, even such as are in us the punishment of sin; and did demit himself to be one of the lowest condition of men: for "he took upon him the form of a servant," and not of a glorified saint.

14. Though Jesus Christ did take upon him the whole nature of a man, consisting of a true body, Heb. ii. 14; and a reasonable soul, Matt. xxvi. 38; yet he did not assume the person of a man, so as to be two persons, one as God, another as man: he is one person still, the human nature subsisting in the second Person of the Godhead: so "he took to himself" not a servant, but "the form," or, nature of "a servant," and he remaineth the same "he," or person, after incarnation, which he was before: "He took to himself." (See Luke i. 35.)

15. Though there be but one person in Christ, yet there are two distinct natures, the divine and human, without confusion or mixture, every one reserving their own distinct properties: so he "took on him the form of a servant;" but did not change the form or nature of a servant, to the nature of God. See Luke ii. 52; John ii. 24, 25.)

16. The truth and reality of Christ's human nature was evidently known unto those who did converse with him, by the fashion and proportion of his body, and the whole strain of his carriage and actions, they being such as are in, and use to be gone about by other men: for so much is meant by his "being found in fashion as a man."

17. Jesus Christ, though God equal with the Father, and so above all law given unto men, yet being incarnate, did take upon him the yoke of obedience unto the Father's will revealed in the law; that by the obedience of one, many might be made righteous, (see Rom. v. 19.) "And became obedient unto death;" where his death is spoken of as the term of his obedience, or as but one part of it at most, the rest consisting in his performance of what the law, both moral and ceremonial did require, and is commonly called, his active obedience. (See Matt. xii. 15.)

18. So great is the guilt of sin, Deut. xxvii. 26, so strict is that obligation, to undergo eternal wrath, which lieth upon us for sin, Matt. v. 18; that no less could pay our ransom, and satisfy provoked justice, than the shameful, painful, and cursed death of the Son of God: for in order to our redemption, he behaved to be "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

19. Such was the love both of the Father, John iii. 16, and of the Son, John xv. 13, to man's salvation, that for bringing it about the Father appointeth the Son to die; and the Son willingly became "obedient to the Father, even to death."

VER. 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

11. And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The apostle prosecutes this argument taken from Christ's example, showing, that seeing Christ did humble himself so low, God hath exalted him highly, to wit, in his resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 4, ascension, Mark xvi. 19, and placing the man Christ at his right hand, Eph. i. 20; and hath made that divine glory of his which was hid in the days of his humiliation, shine forth by making it manifest, that whole crucified Christ, God and man in one person, is the only begotten Son of God: this is the "Name above every name," ver. 9. The ends of bestowing of this high honour upon Christ, were, first, that all reasonable creatures in heaven, earth, or hell, might adore and worship him as true God, to wit, some willingly, as the elect; others by constraint, as the reprobate shall do, when made to stand at the tribunal of Christ the Judge, to receive their doom, ver. 10. The second end is, that all these creatures may not only subject themselves unto him, but also be made openly to profess this crucified Jesus to be that which he is, even Jehovah, Lord of all things, the only begotten Son of God: all which glory to be bestowed on the Son, should detract nothing from the glory of the Father, but add unto it, ver. 11.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whosoever is willing, for the glory of God and good of others, to part with his own credit, when he is called to it, may expect from the Lord to have his loss and suffering in that, richly recompensed: so was it with Christ, "he humbled himself," and "was obedient, and therefore God highly exalted him." And it is the very scope of the apostle hereby to excite the Philippians to humility, and self-abasing for the good of others: because, as Christ after his humiliation was exalted, so might they expect to be exalted also in their own kind.

2. The Lord Christ having abased himself to the lowest degree of misery, which he engaged to undergo for our redemption, was afterwards (and that by virtue of the covenant of redemption, see Isa. liii. 10,) exalted by the Father to the highest pitch of divine glory: so he maketh his exaltation depend upon his humiliation, the one as the necessary consequence of the other; "Wherefore God also highly exalted him."

3. Through virtue of the personal union betwixt the divine and human nature in Christ, those things which are proper only to the one nature, are ascribed unto and spoken of the whole person: so here, though somewhat of this high honour, bestowed on Christ in his exaltation, be verified only in the divine nature, to wit, in so far as this exaltation speaketh the manifestation of divine glory and majesty, which was before hid: and though somewhat of it be verified only in the human nature, in so far as it includeth his resurrection and ascension; yet the whole of it is ascribed unto the whole person: for he "exalted him," to wit, the person God-man, and "hath given him a name," so that divine glory and majesty, though it be not in the human nature;

yet is, and doth shine forth in that person, which is man; and though not the Godhead, yet the person, who is God, did rise from the death, and ascend from earth to heaven.

4. As the giving unto Christ a name, which is above every name, doth prove him to be true God, enjoying honour and majesty truly divine: for what else can be meant, "by a name above every name?" so, the bowing of every knee unto him, as of right belonging unto him, doth evince the same truth: for hereby is intended that divine honour, due to God only, should be given unto him, as appears from Isa. xlv. 23, compared with Rom. xiv. 10, 11.

5. This "name, which is above every name," or, the divine nature, divine properties, majesty, and splendour truly divine, is said to be given unto Christ, not as if in the days of his humiliation he had not been God; or, as if the human nature after the resurrection had been indued with the divine properties; but because his divine majesty, before hid, was now manifested, and the human nature so highly honoured, that though it be not changed into the divine, yet that person who is man, is true God, and was to be acknowledged as such.

6. The worship and honour due to God, though it consisteth mainly in the inward affections of faith, love, fear, and joy, John iv. 24; yet it doth not exclude the manifestation of these affections by the outward gestures of the body, such as "bowing of the knee," and "confessing with the mouth."

7. External in worship are no infallible discriminating evidences of those who have true grace, from those who have it not: for here at the name of Jesus "every knee shall bow," both of elect and reprobate; "and every tongue shall confess."

8. The disgrace, contempt, and reproach which Jesus Christ did meet with when he was here upon earth, do contribute much for making his glory illustrious now: therefore he saith not, "at that name which is above every name," but, "at the name of Jesus" (which before his resurrection was contemptible, and almost execrable) "every knee shall bow."

9. However a small part of the world only doth acknowledge Christ to be God and Lord, being compared with those who acknowledge him not; yet his glory shall be still upon the growing hand, until all reasonable creatures in heaven, earth, or hell, subject themselves unto him, and acknowledge him to be the only begotten Son of God: for "to him every knee shall bow," and "every tongue shall confess, whether of things in heaven," as angels, and the souls of them who sleep in the Lord; "or things on earth," as men yet alive; "or things under the earth," as devil's and damned souls: for though angels and spirits have neither corporal knees, nor fleshly tongues; yet they have some means whereby they are bound, and shall, whether they will or not, express and testify their subjection to our Lord and Saviour: all which shall have its full accomplishment at the last day, when devils and damned men shall be made to stand at the tribunal of Christ to receive their doom. (See Rom. xiv. 11.)

10. To bow the knee, and uncover the head at

the pronounciation of the syllables of the name Jesus, is but a superstitious custom and will-worship, having no warrant from this scripture: for by the name of Jesus, is not to be understood the naked syllables, sound, and letters of that word, but the glory and majesty of the Lord Christ, who (notwithstanding of that reproach which he did meet with in the days of his flesh) shall one day be acknowledged by all; otherwise if the letter of the words be precisely stuck to, how shall angels and spirits bow the knee, who have none?

11. As the giving of divine honour to Christ doth no ways impair the glory of God the Father: so whoever detracteth any thing from the honour of God the Son (as those heretics do who deny his Godhead) they in so far detract from the glory of God the Father: for the bowing of the knee, and confessing with the tongue, that "Jesus is the Lord," is "to the glory of God the Father."

VER. 12. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

The apostle, from this excellent example of Christ, so sweetly enlarged, and by a new argument taken from their by-past obedience, when he was present with them, presseth and enlargeth the former exhortation, exciting them to make constant progress in the way of salvation, and that with fear and trembling: whereby he dehorteth them from security, pride, and presumption, vices opposite to those virtues of modesty and humility, which from the beginning of the chapter he hath been pressing in order to union.

DOCTRINES.

1. Then do we take a right view of Christ's most excellent example, when the beholding of him maketh us walk like him, by imitating him in these virtues, which were eminently in him: so Paul having enlarged the example of Christ, exciteth them to the imitation thereof; "Wherefore, my beloved," saith he.

2. A minister may, and in some respects ought to commend the people of God committed to his charge, for their willing obedience unto the word of the Lord from his mouth; yea, and make known even to themselves the good esteem he hath of them: so doth the apostle here, "as ye have always obeyed," saith he.

3. Whatever approbation one Christian receiveth from another, or from their judicious discerning minister, it should be made use of as a spur to excite to further diligence; and is not to be rested upon, as if having it we had enough: for so the apostle commandeth, as "ye have always obeyed, now much more work out," &c.

4. The less we have of outward excitements to our duty, and the more of discouragements to drive us from it, we ought to be the more intent upon it; as hereby giving evidence of our sincerity, that what we do floweth not merely from outward principles, but from inward respect and

love to that which is commanded: so the apostle bids them, "now much more obey in his absence," when he was not present to excite them to go forward; and many seducers were now discovered to draw them backward, that hereby they might evidence the sincerity of that obedience which they gave unto him when he was with them present, as not being eye-service unto Paul, but from respect to the command of an omnipresent God.

5. In times of schisms and heart-divisions, it is too ordinary for people to be taken up with trifles, neglecting those things wherein their salvation is most concerned: his pressing of them to "work out their own salvation," importeth that through their divisions this work was much neglected.

6. If people were employed as they ought about that great work, how to get their own souls saved, they would be less in church-rending, and dividing one from another for matters of smaller importance: therefore he presseth them to "work out their own salvation," that he may hereby divert them from their contention and strife.

7. Heaven is not to be expected by the lazy and negligent, or such as draw back: there must be a "working," and a "working of it out," whereby is meant, the employing of all our abilities and endeavours to practise all those means that God hath appointed for the accomplishment of our salvation, Luke xiii. 24; and a constant continuance in the practice of them, until heaven and salvation be actually bestowed, Matt. xxiv. 13. This is to "work out our salvation:" and so the word signifieth to carry on a thing begun to its full end.

8. However Scripture doth condemn that fear in believers, which causeth diffidence, doubting, and despair, Matt. viii. 26; yet there is a fear opposite to carnal security, and to presuming on our own strength, which carrieth along with it a solicitous care about, and diligence in every thing which is our duty, Psa. v. 7, together with humility and diffidence in ourselves, Rom. xi. 20. This is a fear and trembling which is lawful and here commanded, as most necessary for carrying on the begun work of salvation unto a perfect close: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

VER. 13. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He gives a reason why they ought to work with fear and trembling, holding off the extremes of lazy security, and carnal confidence: because the beginning, progress, and accomplishment of every good work is from God working freely; and therefore they were not through security to neglect the motions of his Spirit in them to good, nor yet be puffed up with conceit of their own strength.

DOCTRINES.

1. The very first motions unto and beginnings of any thing which is spiritually good, are the work of God's grace: for "he worketh in us," not only "to do," but also "to will," and that by

infusing into the soul a power to will that which is good; and by actuating that power, making us actually to will: so he not only giveth new supernatural faculties, but also the use and exercise of them.

2. Though the first motions and beginnings of that which is spiritually good be wholly from God, yet he doth not constrain, or by force necessitate the will unto it, but by his omnipotent power he moveth sweetly, and worketh effectually upon the will, so that he maketh it willing to will that good which is by him intended: "He worketh in us to will."

3. The natural faculties and powers of the soul are not made useless by grace, as if they were laid aside to do nothing, the grace of God in us in the mean time doing all things; the will of man is indeed renewed by grace, and the will being thus renewed, doth also work: for, "he worketh in us to will:" we do will, being wrought upon by God.

4. The operation of God's Spirit in working grace is more than naked moral suasion, which consists only in propounding of the object, and holding forth inducing considerations to make the will close with that object, there being still an indifferency left to man's free will to accept or refuse, as liketh him best: there is besides this a real influence from the Spirit of the Lord upon the will; a pull of omnipotent power, whereby the will is moved infallibly and certainly to close with the object: for, "he worketh to will," and so determineth the will.

5. Not only are the first principles of, and motions unto that which is spiritually good from the influence of God's grace; but also the flowing forth of these motions, and acting according to these gracious principles, doth flow from the same free grace of God working powerfully in us: for as he "worketh to will, so also to do."

6. This powerful work of God, whereby he worketh the beginnings, increase, and accomplishments of grace in us, is altogether free, flowing from his good-will and pleasure, and is not merited by any thing wrought by us, Rom. xi. 35. His giving of more grace is not merited by our use-making of the first grace, James iv. 6, nor yet the first grace by the right use of our natural parts, Eph. ii. 1; for he "worketh of his good-will and pleasure."

7. Though Christians be exhorted to the diligent performance of all commanded duties; yet this impedeth not, but the beginning, progress, and accomplishment of every work spiritually good, is wholly from God; for exhortations show what we ought, but not what we are able to do: hence, though they are commanded, ver. 12, "to work out their own salvation;" yet it is affirmed here, "it is God who worketh."

8. To ascribe with Scripture the whole work of grace in us to God as the author, is a strong engine to batter down all confidence in our own strength, and to shake off carnal security, and stir us up to diligence; so far is it from rendering men lazy and secure: for having exhorted them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and so to shake off security and self-confidence, he giveth this as a reason, "It is God that worketh in you," &c.

VER. 14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.

He repeateth his dehoration from dissension and discord; setting forth divisions by their two usual and bitter fruits, to wit, private backbitings, and public contentions or strife.

DOCTRINES.

1. Private backbitings, secret whisperings, and venting of mutual mistakes to the prejudice one of another, as they are unseemly among Christians; so they are the ordinary fruits of division and discord in the church: for these are the murmurings from which he dehortheth.

2. Public fruitless contests, hot debates, bitter reflections, are in like manner unseemly among Christians, and another ordinary fruit of division and discord: for these are the disputings here spoken of.

VER. 15. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

16. Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

He presseth obedience to the former exhortation, because of the many and great advantages following hereupon; namely, that hereby as by one mean, they should attain to live,—First, so as none could justly blame them. Secondly, so as they should do no harm unto others. Thirdly, so as to enjoy convincing evidences of their sonship and adoption. Fourthly, so as to stop the mouths of a number of godless pagans, by holding forth in their profession and practice the way to life revealed in the gospel, that those poor pagans among whom they lived, might fall in love with it; and fifthly, so as Paul might have matter of joy in their salvation by his ministry at the day of judgment: which advantages, as they were to follow one upon another, so all of them would be promoted much by their unity and concord, and obstructed much by dissension and discord.

DOCTRINES.

1. Where a spirit of pride and contention, together with private whisperings and public hot debates falleth in upon a church, it will be found hard for any who is engaged in that strife to carry himself so, but somewhat worthy of blame will escape him: for he maketh their living blameless, to be the fruit of doing all things without murmurings and disputings: "that ye may be blameless."

2. It is no small difficulty also for any who is so engaged, to watch over his own spirit with that circumspection and tenderness, but he will upon some occasion be doing hurt unto others; either by admitting groundless reports, and

entertaining jealousies of them, or speaking to their disadvantage himself; or not standing for their just credit, when they are reproachfully spoken of by others, or by bitter reflections, or some such like thing, 2 Cor. xii. 20; for he maketh harmless living a fruit of unity: "That ye may be harmless."

3. Division and strife, together with the sinful effects which these produce in peoples' spirits, do often grieve the Spirit, and darken these evidences of adoption and sonship, which believers, being in a calm and peaceable temper of spirit, use to see most clearly: for he maketh their being the sons of God, or the evidencing of their sonship, depend upon their doing all things without murmurings: "That ye may be the sons of God."

4. There is nothing which maketh atheists and enemies of the gospel take more occasion to vomit out their spite and malice against it, and the professors of it, than the schisms and sidings, murmurings and backbitings, public contests and bitter reflections, which are among Christians themselves: for he maketh the stopping of the months of godless pagans to be a fruit of unity and peace within the church: "That ye may be without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse nation."

5. It seemeth good unto the Lord for wise reasons, at sometimes to measure out the lot of his precious servants among a multitude of godless profane atheists: for those Philippians did live in "the midst of a perverse nation."

6. It concerneth those who are so disposed of, to walk the more circumspectly, that no occasion may be given to wicked men to wound the gospel through their sides: for so he enjoineth, "that ye may be in the midst of a perverse nation without rebuke."

7. Whatever be a man's carriage otherwise for civility, policy, moral or natural parts; yet so long as he embraceth not the gospel, but remaineth an enemy unto it, he is in God's esteem but crooked, perverse, froward, and nothing worth: so all who lived at Philippi, except the Christians, are here called, "a crooked and perverse nation:" though doubtless many of them did excel in natural and moral parts.

8. Then do we stop the mouths of enemies unto truth, when our conversation for piety unto God, and righteousness unto our neighbour is such, as may discover unto them their failings, and point out that good way wherein they ought to walk: for he shows how we may be free of their rebukes, even when "we shine as lights in the world."

9. There is a duty lying upon Christians, of thirsting after, and labouring to bring about the salvation of those among whom they live, though never so wicked and perverse: so they were "to shine as lights:" and by their profession and practice, to hold forth the word of life in their several stations, "even in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation."

10. Suitable practice joined with profession, putteth such a majesty and splendour upon truth, that every Christian walking orderly is the same to profane men, among whom they live, in order to their conviction and discovery of their sin, and pointing out the lovely beauty of the way of

holiness, which the sun and moon are in the firmament in order to the discovering of things hid by natural darkness; for saith he, "ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth."

11. There is no life worthy to be so called, being compared with the life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, Gal. ii. 20; there is no way of attaining this life but by Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal, John xvii. 3; and there is no way to know Christ but by the gospel, Rom. i. 1, 3. This is imported while the gospel, which holdeth out Christ, is called by way of excellency, "the word of life."

12. The office of the ministry being faithfully gone about, is so painful, weighty, and full of labour, that it may take up any one man wholly, and will prove as wasting of his natural spirits as any other employment which can be chosen: hence the apostle expresseth his pains taken in the ministry, by running in a race, and other strength-consuming exercises: for the word rendered "laboured," signifieth exercises of that kind; "That I have not run, neither laboured."

13. However the pains of a faithful minister will not be lost as to himself, and from the Lord, Isa. xlix. 4, yet they may be in vain as to the peoples' profiting, and in regard of any comfort which he enjoyeth from the fruits of his labours upon them: this is here supposed as possible, while he saith, "that I have not run in vain."

14. The glory which shall be put upon gracious souls in the day of judgment, will add to the glory and joy of those faithful ministers, by whose labours they were gained unto God: hence Paul exhorteth them to unity, to live blameless, without rebuke, shining as lights: "That," saith he, "I may rejoice in the day of Christ."

VER. 17. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

18. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

He sheweth the bringing about of his joy in the day of the Lord Jesus ought to have weight with them, because of his earnest desire after their spiritual good; which was such, that if, as he had been instrumental for bringing them to Christ, by faith in him, so his blood should be shed for confirmation of their blood and sealing of his own ministry or service, his death upon that account should not be grievous, but joyous unto him, and that because it should tend to their advantage and joy: and therefore he bindeth it upon them as their duty, to joy and rejoice with him; that is, to do that which would tend to his comfort and joy; especially that they would walk christianly, study humility, and live in concord and unity, which, ver. 2, he called, "the fulfilling of his joy."

DOCTRINES.

1. The sacrifices acceptable unto God under the New Testament, next to that of Christ his offering up himself upon the cross, Heb. ix. 14. are, when Christians being made to judge them-

selves, and so, as it were, slain by the service and ministry of the word, are chased to lay hold by faith on that sacrifice of Christ's, and offer up themselves wholly to be spent and wasted in his service, Rom. xii. 1; for the apostle here speaketh with allusion to the Levitical sacrifices, making their faith, or giving themselves over to God in Christ by faith, the sacrifice; and his ministry or service, the sacrificing knife; by the means whereof, they were as it were killed and offered up, being made to die to their own righteousness and sinful lusts, and to flee unto God in Christ by faith; "Upon the sacrifice and service of your faith."

2. However persecutors, in shedding the blood of God's people for their adherence to truth and duty, do aim at no further but to satisfy their own cruelty and rage, Matt. xiv. 3, yet the Lord intendeth a more high and noble end, to wit, that hereby believers may be more confirmed in the faith of that truth for which they suffer: for if Paul should be offered up by death, he foreseeth that it would be "upon the sacrifice of their faith:" he speaketh, as was said, with allusion to the ancient way of sacrificing, where wine and oil were poured out upon the meat-offering, that the sacrifice might be entire and complete, according to what the law did prescribe, Lev. ii. 7, 15; so the shedding of his blood should tend to accomplish the spiritual sacrifice of their faith, they attaining thereby a strong confirmation to it: "If I be offered up," or, "poured forth upon the sacrifice," &c.

3. Ministers would preach nothing to God's people, but what they dare seal the truth of with their blood, if God call them to it; so Paul is ready to have his blood poured out upon "the service of their faith," that is, for confirmation of his own ministry, by means whereof faith was wrought in them.

4. When God doth call a man to suffer, and maketh use of his sufferings for confirmation of any part of gospel truth, and for edifying the body of Christ, he ought to rejoice in his cross, as if it were his crown: so Paul, "I joy and rejoice."

5. The ardent zeal and affection which we see in others toward our salvation and spiritual good, should incite us to be as affectionate towards it ourselves; so from this that Paul was so much taken up with their spiritual advantage, as to die for it, he presseth them to take part with him: "Wherefore, do ye also joy with me," to wit, in that wherein ye did rejoice, which was in their Christian conversation, unity and concord among themselves.

VER. 19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

In the second part of the chapter the apostle promises, if the Lord Christ should so judge fitting, to send Timotheus unto them: and that not only for their good and advantage to be reaped by his labours, in composing their begun differences, and stopping the mouths of gainsayers;

but also for his own comfort, as hoping at Timothy's return, to hear their affairs to be in a better posture than they were for the present.

DOCTRINES.

1. The presence and assistance sometimes of one man eminent for piety, parts, and reputation, will prove so steadable to the church, labouring under schism and feared persecution, that the very intimation of a purpose to send such a one, will add much spirit and courage unto those who are honest: therefore Paul, to keep them from fainting, maketh known his purpose to send Timotheus.

2. All our promises and purposes are to be undertaken with submission to the will of Christ, and grounded upon his power and strength (and not our own) for bringing of them unto timeous performance; so was Paul's purpose to send Timothy: "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send;" whereby he doth not express a hope or confidence of faith, but only of charity and love to the church's good, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, which made him hope that God would bring about that particular, which tended so much to their advantage, although he had no certain promise for it to build faith upon.

3. The crosses and comforts of a Christian, indued with a truly public spirit, depend not so much upon those things which are of particular concernment to himself, as those which are of public concernment to Jesus Christ, and to his church in the world; so Paul's comfort, though now in bonds, depended much upon the state of this church at Philippi: "I may be of good comfort, when I know your state," saith he.

VER. 20. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

He commendeth Timotheus from his affection towards them, in so far, that he came not short of the apostle himself, or at least resembled him most in his sincerity and diligence in seeking after their spiritual good. There was no man like-minded to Paul, except Timotheus alone; for he is excepted, as appears from ver. 22.

DOCTRINES.

1. It contributeth much for the good success of a minister's pains among a people, that he be looked upon by them, as one who will thirst after their good, more than any thing else; so Paul being to send Timothy, representeth him as such: "he naturally careth for your estate."

2. That a minister may be fitted to do good among a people, he would place before himself the pattern of the apostles; and so far as in him lieth, set himself to imitate them in that care, diligence, and affection, which they had towards the church of Christ: for herein is Timothy commended, "I have no man like-minded."

3. Then doth a minister imitate the apostles in watching over their flock; when, first, the state of souls is the object of his care, "he careth for your state." Secondly, when their care is more than ordinary, and in a sort anxious and solicitous: even a care which in other things

would be sinful; the Greek word signifieth such a care. And, thirdly, when it is such as is natural and kindly, arising, not from constraint, 1 Pet. v. 2, but from love to the party cared for, being such as is the care of a parent toward his child: "Who will naturally care," saith he.

VER. 21. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

He further commendeth the care which Timotheus had of them; it was such, that he postponed his own particular affairs to the work of Christ among them, wherein he was singular; almost all others, who were with Paul, refusing (as would appear) to undertake so long a journey, from the too great respect they had to their own ease and profit.

DOCTRINES.

1. So near is the relation betwixt Christ and the church (such as is of the husband to the wife, Rev. xxi. 9, of the head to the members, Eph. i. 22, of the king to his subjects, Matt. xxi. 5,) that both their concernments are one; what concerneth them concerneth him; so the undertaking of so long a journey, for the advantage of the church at Philippi, which all declined, except Timotheus only, is here called, a "seeking the things of Jesus Christ."

2. This commendeth a man's zeal for Christ much, when the lukewarmness of others doth not blunt his edge; but though all should be for their own things, yet he alone will be for the things of Jesus Christ; for herein is Timotheus commended.

3. Our own things, that is, worldly ease, profit, credit, pleasure; and the things of Christ, wherein his honour, and the public good of his people, is much concerned, are often in two contrary balances; respect to the former, making us frequently to neglect the latter; for so are they here opposed: "Their own things, not the things of Christ."

4. Though Christians may, and justly ought, to seek their own things, with subordination to the things of Christ, 1 Tim. v. 8; yet they may not seek their own things in opposition to the things of Christ; that is, so as for respect to the former, to neglect the latter; for Paul condemns not the seeking of their own things simply, but that through seeking of them, they did not "seek the things of Christ."

5. A Christian, and especially a minister, ought to be so disposed, that no private interest or concernment of his own, should so far weigh with him as to make him, for respect unto it, shift or refuse any thing, which Christ doth call him unto for furtherance of his work; for herein is Timotheus commended; and, for want of this disposition, the rest are blamed: "All seek their own things."

6. The Lord, by putting professors upon hazardous, troublesome, and expensive employments for Christ, discovereth often in many too much love to self, and little love to Christ, which otherways would have lain undiscovered; so the motion of this long journey to Philippi, did discover in the most part of Paul's companions, that

they did "seek their own things, and not the things of Christ."

VER. 22. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

For proof of all, he appealeth to their own experience concerning Timotheus, while he preached the gospel with Paul at Philippi, as a son with the father; which speaketh both his modesty, as also, that he was like-minded with Paul, in all things following his example.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister's own carriage, if it be modest, Christian, and ministerial, will speak more to his commendation among judicious Christians, than all the recommendations which he can have from others, although these be in their own place useful and lawful: "But ye know the proof of him," saith he, I need not speak much for him.

2. The calling of the ministry is a service; and ministers are servants to Christ, for the church, and not lords over their faith, 1 Pet. v. 3; so Paul and "Timotheus did serve in the gospel."

3. Those who are of older standing in the ministry, and thereby have attained a good measure of respect, parts, experience, and prudence, should not despise these of later standing, but acknowledge them as fellow-servants; so Paul, though a great apostle and the elder minister, yet acknowledgeth Timotheus as his fellow-servant: "He hath served with me in the gospel," saith he.

4. These who are of late standing in the ministry, ought to honour the aged as the son doth the parent, obeying their counsels and following their example in those things which tend to the edification of the church: so did Timotheus honour Paul: "as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."

VER. 23. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

24. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

He concludeth from what is said, his purpose to send Timotheus, having once seen how himself should be disposed of, in relation to his present imprisonment and bonds, ver. 23; and withal giveth them hopes that he himself, being set at liberty, should give them a visit shortly, ver. 24.

DOCTRINES.

1. Those who have power of sending forth ministers to flocks, should send such as (other things being equal) are most willing to spend and be spent for the people's good, and are best known unto, and approved of by the flock for their modesty, diligence, zeal to the gaining of souls, and for their other parts; for Paul, having shown Timotheus to be such, concludeth, "him therefore will I send."

2. A minister may then postpone the public good and comfort of the church to his own particular, when his particular comfort may carry

along with it a sufficient future recompense of larger comfort to the church for her present loss and delay; so Paul keepeth back Timothy for a time to attend himself, expecting that probably he should be liberate himself shortly, that by the certain knowledge of his being set at liberty, they might be the more comforted; "So soon as I shall see how it will go with me."

3. The running upon hazard, and drawing on of a cross by our former zeal for Christ, and diligence in his work, should not make us repent of what we have done; nor yet draw back from doing the like, whenever any new opportunity is offered: so Paul resolveth to go from the prison to his work again: "I myself shall come shortly."

4. Whatever may be said from chap. i. 25, concerning Paul's persuasion, grounded upon special revelation, of his delivery from prison, yet it appeareth nothing was revealed to him of the time when his delivery should be; and therefore in this place, when he would limit it to a short time, he speaketh not with so full persuasion: "I trust in the Lord to see you shortly," saith he.

VER. 25. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

The apostle, in the mean time, sendeth back their own pastor Epaphroditus, who had been sent to Paul with some supply, and to minister unto him in the prison; and lest the Philippians should have thought that either he had deserted Paul, or that Paul had not thought him worth the keeping, he sheweth that he had expressly sent him back, and commendeth him as a worthy man, from five honourable epithets.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is a relation of fraternity among Christians, as all being born over again through the virtue of the same Spirit, Eph. iv. 4, within the bosom of one common mother the church, Gal. iv. 26, having all interest in God as their Father, Rom. viii. 15, and in Jesus Christ, who is the first-born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29; for Paul calleth Epaphroditus "a brother," as he was a Christian.

2. As the ministerial employment is a painful laborious work, so those who are employed in it should be fellow-labourers, working to the hands of each other; for in respect of the ministerial calling, common to both, he calleth him his "companion in labour," or co-worker.

3. Though every Christian will have a battle, Eph. vi. 12, yet faithful ministers, who are as standard-bearers or sentinels, Ezek. iii. 17, and march in the front before the Lord's people, 1 Tim. iv. 12, have a peculiar battle of their own for truth and piety, against profanity and error; with respect to which battle, he calleth him "fellow-soldier."

4. To be employed by the church, and sent upon her affairs, if it were but for conveying of their charity unto those for whom it is appointed, is an honourable employment, even to an apostle's companion; for Paul commendeth

him from this, that he was "the church's messenger," to wit, for carrying of their charity to Paul, chap. iv. 18.

5. To be in any measure useful for and serviceable unto an honest sufferer for Christ, is matter of no small commendation; for Epaphroditus is commended from this, that "he ministered unto Paul in his wants."

VER. 26. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

The reasons why Paul thought it necessary to send Epaphroditus unto them, are subjoined in this and the two following verses; whereof the first is taken from Epaphroditus's great desire to be at his charge, together with his great grief and heaviness for them, as knowing they would be exceedingly weighted for him, having heard that he was sick.

DOCTRINES.

1. A faithful minister's affection unto and longing after his absent flock, will go beyond his desire after family, friends, and other relations; for his longing after them "all," his whole flock, and not his natural friends only, was that which necessitated Paul to send him home; "He longed after you all."

2. The affection of a minister unto his flock, and to their advancing in the way of grace, ought to be such, that, even when through necessity of sickness, or of other lawful employments, he is withdrawn from them, he may yet still long to be among them; so Epaphroditus, though detained by sickness, and his necessary attendance upon Paul, "yet longed after them all."

3. There ought to be that love and sympathy betwixt minister and people, as to make each of them grieve for the affliction and grief of another; so the Philippians hearing their minister was sick, are weighted with it, and he knowing they would be grieved for him, becometh full of heaviness for them; "He was full of heaviness, because ye had heard he was sick."

4. Grief or heaviness of mind, because of the hand of God upon ourselves or others, is not inconsistent with Christian patience and submission to providence; patience moderateth those passions, but doth not destroy them; so Epaphroditus is commended from this, that "he was full of heaviness, because of their grief."

VER. 27. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

He sheweth the report of Epaphroditus's deadly disease was true, and commendeth the especial mercy of God, both to Epaphroditus and himself; whereby the one was restored to health, and the other thereby delivered from further occasion of great grief.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord doth sometimes suffer his pre-

cious servants to fall in dangerous diseases, not exempting his most faithful ministers, who, by reason of their labours in the work of the Lord, and the many discouragements whereby their spirits are assaulted in it, Isa. xlix. 4, are as much liable to diseases and infirmities of body as any other; for "indeed he was sick."

2. The Lord doth sometimes suffer his servants to fall into desperate dangers, for which there is no human remedy, that his mercy may be the more seen in their delivery; so "he was sick near unto death;" his disease was deadly, and incurable by human art. Hence his restoration to health is looked on as an act of God's mercy; "But God had mercy on him."

3. That God preserveth the life of faithful pastors is an act of no small mercy, especially unto those who enjoy the benefit of their labours; and the removal of such by death should be looked upon as no small stroke; "but God had mercy;" and his removal by death would have been "sorrow upon sorrow," even to Paul.

4. Seeing death, considered in itself, is terrible, Psa. lv. 4, the reward of sin, Rom. vi. 23, and a privation of present life, James ii. 26, delivery from it, though but for a time, is a mercy even to believers, who by death lose nothing, but gain much, chap. i. 23, especially if their delivery from death be a mercy unto others: hence it is that Epaphroditus's delivery from death, was a mercy even unto himself; "But God had mercy on him."

5. A work of mercy ordinarily goeth not alone, but carrieth many mercies along with it; some to the person himself upon whom the work is wrought, and some to others who are concerned in him. Thus the mercy that was manifested to Epaphroditus in his recovery, was a mercy also to Paul; "And not on him only, but on me also."

6. Then do mercies weigh with us as they ought, when we look upon the sad effects which would have followed upon the not bestowing of such a mercy. Thus Paul taketh a view of the extremity of sorrow which the death of Epaphroditus would have caused unto him, which maketh him look upon his recovery as a mercy; "But on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

7. So merciful is God, that though sometimes he causeth grief unto his dearest servants, yet he considereth their weakness, and doth not overcharge them with sorrow; so he spareth the life of Epaphroditus, lest Paul "should have had sorrow upon sorrow."

8. Courage under sufferings for Christ, and rejoicing in God, may well consist with moderate sorrow and heaviness, because of cross dispensations; for though Paul hath professed often his great joy under his bonds, (as chap. i. 4, 18,) yet he was not free of sorrow; "Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow," which supposeth he had some sorrow already.

VER. 28. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

Having given and enlarged one reason for his sending Epaphroditus, he addeth other two. First, that the Philippians, having seen their faithful minister, whom they once took for dead, might rejoice. Secondly, that Paul's own grief might be somewhat eased, their minister being once restored to them, of whom they were deprived for his cause.

DOCTRINES.

1. True love and Christian friendship protracteth not favours, but doth timeously what should be done for those unto whom it pretendeth; so Paul sendeth him timeously and carefully, that is, presently after his recovery; "I sent him therefore the more carefully."

2. The weights and griefs of the godly do prove an occasion of rejoicing afterwards; their evening of sorrow endeth in a morning of joy; so the grief which these Philippians had, because of their pastor's sickness and apprehended death, endeth in joy, when they see him in health again; "that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice."

2. It will be somewhat burdensome to an ingenuous spirit, whatever otherwise be his straits, that others should suffer prejudice, and be at any loss by reason of their kindness unto him; so it was matter of sorrow unto Paul, that those Philippians, because of their respect unto him, were so long deprived of their own minister: this was the sorrow which he was to be eased of by his return; "That I may be the less sorrowful."

4. It is sufficient for modest, submissive, and exercised Christians, to meet with some mitigation of their sorrow, though it be not removed from them wholly; so Paul looks on this as satisfactory to him, that of the great weight of sorrow and affliction wherewith he was pressed, a part was to be removed; "That I might be the less sorrowful," saith he.

VER. 29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

From what he hath said of Epaphroditus, he exhorteth them to receive him with all joy, and to give all due honour and respect unto him, and to such ministers as he was.

DOCTRINES.

1. The carriage or deportment of people towards faithful ministers should not be as unto private friends, but as to public persons representing Christ, as sent from Christ, and as ambassadors in Christ's stead; for this is "to receive them in the Lord," which Paul here commandeth.

2. There cannot a richer blessing be bestowed upon a people, than that of a faithful, painful, and loving minister; therefore Paul bids them "receive him with all gladness," as if he had been all the friends they had in the world restored unto them from death to life.

3. When the Lord doth bless a people with such a minister, they ought to esteem highly of him, as of a precious jewel and pearl of price;

as they would not, by their ingratitude and loathing contempt, provoke the Lord to plague them with his removal, Matt. x. 23: "Hold such in reputation," or, esteem of such as precious.

4. As it is Satan's great design to bring a faithful, painful minister, to disgrace and contempt, Zech. iii. 1, so it is the duty of all who wish the thriving of piety, and the church to be secured from profanity and error, by all means to uphold the credit of that calling, together with the lawful authority and due respect of those who carry themselves faithfully in it; so Paul commandeth "that such be held in reputation."

VER. 30. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

He giveth a reason why they ought to receive him gladly, because he had in a sort misregarded his life, and brought himself to the door of death, for the work of Christ, that is, by his watching, travail, and pains-taking, to minister unto Paul in his necessities; doing his utmost that Paul should want no necessary duty, no more than if all the Philippians had been present attending him; at whose direction he did what he did, and which they would have done themselves if they had been present.

DOCTRINES.

1. Not only the preaching of the word, but also the performance of the duties of humanity, civility, and charity unto those who suffer for truth, is the work of Christ; and that not only because such works are particularly enjoined by Christ, Heb. xiii. 3, but what is done unto any such, is accounted done to him, (see Matt. xxv. 36, 40:) so Epaphroditus's attending unto Paul in prison, is called "the work of Christ."

2. Then may a man have a good conscience under his sickness and bodily infirmities, yea, and death itself, when his well-ordered zeal for Christ hath brought them on; for Epaphroditus is here commended, that "for the work of Christ he was near unto death;" he had no evil conscience therefore in bringing sickness upon himself.

3. However God loveth mercy better than sacrifice, and willett no man foolishly and rashly to be prodigal of his own life and health, no, not under pretence of doing service unto him, 1 Tim. v. 23; yet there are some cases, wherein he calleth men to the performance of some duties, and which they should be willing to go about, although they should evidently perceive most certain hazard of life and health to ensue thereby: such are the duties of owning those who suffer for Christ, contributing to the supply of their outward necessities when they cannot be supplied otherways; the faithful discharging of any public employment wherein we are intrusted; those were the duties for the performance whereof Epaphroditus regarded not his life, wherein he is here commended; "For the work of Christ he regarded not his life, to supply your lack of service."

4. As it sometimes falleth out that, through distance of place, or other insuperable difficulties,

the children of God cannot manifest that cordial affection by their own presence and personal attendance which they carry unto those who suffer for truth; so they ought to supply that inlack, so far as is possible, by others, who, representing them, may go about these duties of humanity and charity in their name. Thus there was no want of affection in these Philippians toward Paul, only there was "a lack of service;" they not being able, though otherways willing, to attend him, because of distance of place; and they direct their pastor to supply this "lack of their service towards him."

CHAPTER III.

In the first part of this chapter, having pre-mitted an exhortation to rejoice in the Lord Christ, ver. 1, he exhorteth them to beware of false teachers, who gloried in circumcision, ver. 2; showing that not they, but he, and other true believers, had right to that title, ver. 3.

In the second part, being to oppose his own practice to their dangerous opinions in the matter of justification, he sheweth he had as much to boast of as they, ver. 4; which he instanteth in eight privileges, ver. 5, 6; in none whereof he did now place any confidence, ver. 7, nor yet upon any thing imaginary, without Christ; confirming this his resolution and practice, by showing the advantages to be hereby gained; namely, First, access to Christ, ver. 8. Secondly, his being judged, not according to his own righteousness, but Christ's, ver. 9. Thirdly, experimental knowledge of the worth and power which is in Christ, ver. 10. And fourthly, his attaining to the glorious resurrection of the just, ver. 11; and obviate a mistake, showing he had not yet attained unto perfection in the knowledge of and conformity with Christ, but that it was his aim, ver. 12; which he enlargeth, and cleareth by a similitude taken from runners, ver. 13, 14.

In the third part, he exhorteth them to follow his example, leaving place for God to give a more full manifestation of any thing which was doubtful, ver. 15, providing they did walk peaceably and tenderly, ver. 16: and so, having repeated the exhortation, ver. 17, he enforce it, because, First, there were many whose example was not to be followed, to wit, the false apostles, whom he setteth forth in their blackest colours, ver. 18, 19. Secondly, his own example was worth the following, ver. 20; and he, with such as he was, to be rewarded gloriously, ver. 21.

VER. 1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

That he may guard those Philippians against the errors of the false teachers in the doctrine of justification, he premits an exhortation "to rejoice in the Lord Christ," as the author, purchaser, and worker-out of their salvation, and all their other happiness; excusing himself for his often incul-

eating of the following admonition, because it was not wearisome unto him, nor yet unprofitable for them.

DOCTRINES.

1. Unity in judgment and affection would be so pressed upon us by others, and endeavoured by ourselves, as not to prejudge the purity of doctrine; for having pressed unity, chap. ii., he presseth purity of doctrine as much in this.

2. According as people are tainted with or tempted unto error, so should ministers be more or less in the public refutation of it. Thus the apostle, writing to the Galatians, entereth a just dispute with the false apostles, urging reasons and answering objections, because many in that church were already seduced by them, Gal. iii. 1; but here, because the Philippians were only tempted unto, and not much overtaken with error, he doth not so much dispute, as admonish and exhort.

3. To rejoice in Christ, that is, to keep our hearts affected towards him and the doctrine which speaketh of him, to be constantly and with delight making our recourse unto him, and employing him as the author, procurer, and worker out of all our happiness here and hereafter, is a choice guard against any error which is contrary unto those truths relating to him: for the apostle being to guard against errors in the doctrine of justification, premitteth this as a foundation to the whole work, "rejoice in the Lord."

4. It is not sufficient to know what Jesus Christ is, what he hath done for us, or what use may and should be made of him, except that the knowledge which we have of him do produce suitable affections in the heart towards him; for, having made Christ known, chap. ii. 6, &c., he inferreth from thence, with a "finally," that their hearts should "rejoice in him," the word saith as much as there remained one thing yet necessary.

5. The often repeating and frequent inculcation of such points of truth as are most for edification of the hearers, ought neither to be burdensome to a minister, nor yet wearied of by the people; so, to inculcate often the following admonition was not "grievous unto Paul," neither were they to weary of it, "because unto them it was safe."

6. Temptations unto error, for the most part, are covered over with such pious pretences, Col. ii. 23, and lovely baits, Gal. vi. 12, that there is need of many guards and frequent warnings to keep them off; so the apostle thinketh it necessary to reiterate again and again, both by preaching while he was present, and now by letter while he is absent, this following exhortation, to beware of false teachers: "But for you it is safe."

VER. 2. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

He exhorteth them particularly to beware of false teachers, who did labour to conjoin, in the matter of justification, the righteousness of works with that righteousness which is of Christ by faith; whom he calleth first "dogs," because of their barking against the sincere doctrine of the

gospel, and their railing against the orthodox preachers thereof; and this all to get wherewith to satisfy their insatiable greed. Secondly, "evil workers;" because, under pretence of working well to establish truth and build up the church, they did what in them lay to destroy them both, and were men of wicked lives, ver. 19. However, they pretended much zeal for the law of Moses and good works. Thirdly, "concision," alluding to circumcision, whereof they gave out themselves to be patrons and defenders, and designed themselves by it, Gal. ii. 12, which name he taketh from them, as being unworthy of it, and calleth them "concision," as it were, the destroyers and renderers of the church.

DOCTRINES.

1. There ought to be a spirit of wise and godly zeal in faithful preachers against the spreaders of errors, how great soever their reputation be among the people: so Paul calleth them "dogs," &c.

2. That ministers may guard the Lord's people against seducers, they would labour to undeceive them, by taking off the vizard of piety, zeal, and other seeming virtues, under which the spreaders of errors do usually lurk, that so they may be seen in their own colours; thus they pretended to purity, to be patrons of good works, and upholders of circumcision, one of God's ordinances; and the apostle, taking off the vizard, calleth them profane "dogs, evil workers, and concision," or church-renderers, under pretence of pleading for a divine ordinance.

3. It is the duty of the Lord's people to know and discern those who preach truth from those who preach error, that they may cleave to the one and flee from the other: "Beware of dogs;" the word signifieth see, and know them, and from knowledge eschew them.

4. It is not unbecoming piety to use merry words, witty and pleasant allusions, yea, and upon some occasions, piercing jests or taunts; providing always there be no scurrility or baseness, Eph. v. 4; for, as often elsewhere, 1 Kings xviii. 27, so the Spirit of God here maketh use of such, while, alluding to circumcision, he calleth them "concision," giving them a name like in sound, but much different in the usual signification, and as much to their disadvantage.

VER. 3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

He giveth a reason why he did not deign them with the name of circumcision; because not they, but he, and true believers, had right to that title, they only having the thing signified by circumcision, whereof he maketh three parts: First, worshipping God with the inward and spiritual affections of a renewed heart. Secondly, confiding in Christ alone for salvation, as being the substance of all these shadows. Thirdly, a denying of confidence in any of these fleshly privileges, or in any thing but Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though fair pretences to piety and purity of worship be always on the side of those who err from truth, Matt. vii. 15, yet the reality of that piety unto which they pretend is frequently to be found in those who oppose them most : so was it here ; “ We are the circumcision,” that is, we have the reality of that ordinance, and they only a pretence unto and shadow of it.

2. Circumcision, and the rest of those Levitical ordinances, may be said in some sense yet to continue, in so far as the thing signified by them doth remain ; for therefore Paul calleth true believers the circumcision, because they had the thing signified by it : “ We are the circumcision, who serve God in the spirit.”

3. Circumcision was instituted for this end, that by the outward cutting off the flesh, the people of God might be carried on, first, to cut off the sinful, fleshly affections of their heart, that so with renewed spirits they might serve God ; and secondly, to lay hold on the blood of the promised Messias for pardon of sin, and salvation : for Paul mentioneth those two as the thing signified by circumcision ; “ We worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ.”

4. Though it was sufficient for Paul to oppose the inward worship of the heart to the practice of circumcision, once an ordinance, but now abolished ; yet it followeth not that outward ordinances, while standing in force, may upon that account be wholly neglected, Gen. xvii. 14 ; for if the outward rite of circumcision had been yet in force, his pretending to the thing signified would not have justified his omission of it.

5. External performance of commanded worship, without inward exercise of the spirit in faith, love, hope, and mortification of fleshly lusts by the power of God’s Spirit, is scarce worthy of the name of worship to God, neither will it be owned by him as such ; for it is this exercise of the spirit unto which Paul giveth the name of true worship : “ We are the circumcision which serve God in the spirit.”

6. We should so go about commanded duties in spirit and truth, as not to rest upon or glory in them, but in Christ alone and his righteousness, as the only meritorious cause of our salvation ; so, though they worshipped God in the spirit, “ yet we rejoice in Christ Jesus,” saith he.

7. Confidence in Christ for salvation, and upon any other thing besides him ; such as are outward privileges, external performances, are so inconsistent with, and opposite to one another, that if the one be, the other cannot be ; so Paul opposeth them here : “ We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

VER. 4. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he may trust in the flesh, I more :

The apostle, in the second part of the chapter, being to demonstrate the vanity of relying upon any thing besides Christ in the point of justification, from his own practice, sheweth ; first, that

he had as much to boast of, upon the account of outward privileges, as any of his adversaries ; yea, or any other whatsoever, if he had found it safe to venture his salvation on such a bottom ; and this he declareth, first, in general in this verse.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord, in his deep wisdom, raiseth up such as are most fit to oppose seducers, who come not short of them in anything whereof they glory most ; that even wherein they glory they may be found but as others : (see 2 Cor. xi. 12.) Thus against those who boasted so much in their outward privileges, as to oppose them unto Christ’s righteousness in the matter of justification, he raiseth up Paul to batter down both their pride and error, who had as much matter of boasting that way as they, or any other : “ Though I might have also confidence in the flesh.”

2. Then may a man commend himself by making public what he hath of graces, parts, or privileges, equally with or above others, when his doing so tendeth to beat down the vainglory of those who boast more of what they are than is meet ; for Paul here declareth at length his outward privileges, wherein he would yield to none ; which he could not have done without ostentation, except it had been to show the vanity and pride of his adversaries.

3. The glory and praise of safety from God’s wrath, which men do promise unto themselves from their parts or privileges, as they are opposed unto Christ, is not so much in reality as in men’s own conceit and fancy ; therefore, he saith not, if any other man hath, but, “ If he think he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh.”

VER. 5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews ; as touching the law, a Pharisee ;

6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church ; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

What he spake in general of his ceding to none in those things whereof his adversaries boasted most, he maketh now to appear by reckoning forth eight privileges. As first, he “ was circumcised,” and so a member of the church, Gen. xvii. 11. Secondly, “ the eighth day,” to wit, after his birth, and so no proselyte or convert from among the Gentiles, Exod. xii. 48. Thirdly, “ of the stock of Israel,” and so not the son of a proselyte, who used to be circumcised the eighth day, Gen. xvii. 12. Fourthly, “ of the tribe of Benjamin ;” whereby he sheweth the certainty of the former, by pointing at his particular tribe ; as also the nobility of his race, the first king of Israel being of that tribe, 1 Sam. x. 20, 21 ; and that he came of that tribe which, with the tribe of Judah, clave to the house of David, and the true worship of God at Jerusalem, after the revolt of the ten tribes. Fifthly, “ an Hebrew of the Hebrews,” to show his descent from Abraham, called, “ the Hebrew,” Gen. xiv. 13, with-

out any mixture of blood by marriage with foreign nations, which might be exactly known by their public registers, wherein was marked the several descents of particular families, Ezra ii. 62. Sixthly, "as touching the law, a Pharisee," and so for his profession most strict; the sect of the Pharisees pretending to more strictness than any other; (see Acts xxvi. 5.) Seventhly, for his zeal to the law he was most fervent, and so that without respect of persons "he persecuted the Christian church," who were looked upon as destroyers of the law. And, eighthly, as to his personal obedience unto the law, "his conversation was blameless;" he could not be justly taxed by men, who see no further than the outside, 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

DOCTRINES.

1. Those things which natural men, especially the finer sort of hypocrites, rely upon before they come to Christ, are such as are here reckoned forth, and may be reduced unto three heads; first, church privileges; such were the first five. Secondly, strictness and zeal in profession; such were the sixth and seventh. Thirdly, a life free from scandal, and as to men, blameless; such was the eighth; for Paul mentioneth all those as props whereupon men who are destitute of Christ do rely; yea, and himself did once place his confidence in them, as appears from ver. 7. "Those things were gain unto me."

2. A profession of more than ordinary strictness in religious observances is no infallible mark of grace; for natural men without Christ, yea, church-renders, and dividing sects, such as were the Pharisees, may pretend to it; so Paul once, to wit, when he was out of Christ, and a render and persecutor of the church, boasted in this that he was a Pharisee, that is, one of that sect which pretended to more than ordinary strictness.

3. Where men do once engage themselves in sects and schisms, their furious zeal will drive them on to prosecute their nearest relations, and those who have nearest interest in Christ, if they oppose themselves to their damnable errors; and to place the very substance of religion, and of doing service unto God, in their persecuting of them; so Paul, being a schismatic Pharisee, did persecute all who were of the church without distinction; and mentioneth his so doing, as one prop of his confidence and boasting, before he came to Christ: "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church."

4. Natural men, yea, bloody persecutors, may attain to freedom from any outward vice, and to such a conversation as will be in the sight of men altogether blameless; so Paul, even when persecuting the church, he was, as "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless."

VER. 7. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Having shown what he had to boast of, he declareth his esteem of all those things, to wit, that however when he was in an unconverted state he relied upon them for salvation as much as any other; yet now, having seen nothing

would redound unto him thereby, but a real hurt and damage, he had taken his confidence from off them, and wholly placed it on Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is a matter of great difficulty for any man, especially in an unconverted estate, to excel in parts, privileges, or in a blameless life beyond others, and not rely on them, as that which will bring them to heaven; and so in effect put them in Christ's place; for "those things were gain to" Paul; he thought to merit heaven by them.

2. Whatever a man doth rely upon without or besides Christ for righteousness and salvation, he will, when rightly enlightened, see a real loss and hurt to be in it; so, "those things were counted loss by" Paul; because not only they could not effectuate that for which he did rely upon them; but also his confidence in them, and the esteem which he had of them, impeded him much from coming to Christ: "Those I counted loss."

3. There is that in Christ, and only in him, wherein a soul thoroughly touched with the sight of sin and deserved wrath will find full and solid satisfaction, in order to righteousness and salvation; so Paul, being thus touched, Acts ix. 6, taketh his confidence from off all those things, placing it only on Christ: "He counted them loss for Christ;" that is, that he might know him, gain him, and be found in him, being clothed with his righteousness, as he explaineth afterwards.

VER. 8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

What he hath presently spoken of, taking his confidence from any thing in himself, and placing it wholly upon Christ, he repeateth again and again, and extendeth it also to all things imaginable without Christ: which things, however in themselves excellent, yet being compared with excellent Christ, and as to the point of placing confidence upon them, were but loss and damage unto him; and however the taking of his confidence from off them was difficult for him, and a very suffering upon his part, yet he had done it, and in the mean time did not repent himself of it, counting them as very dung in the forementioned respects; and this all, that he might gain Christ.

DOCTRINES.

In the matter of our justification before God, we are not only not to rely upon our church privileges, or our works seemingly good before conversion; but also are not to place our confidence even in these works which are really good, as being wrought in us by the Spirit of God after our conversion: for Paul maketh his speech to rise from those things which he had, being yet in nature, to all things, even not excepting those

which he had, being now converted, although before that time he had done many things, which were really good: "Yea, doubtless, I count (in the present time) all things loss."

2. Before a man do quit his own righteousness, and all his other props of vain confidence, to rely wholly upon Christ, he must first know somewhat of Christ's worth and sufficiency to do his turn; so Paul hath some knowledge of a matchless excellency in Christ, which serveth as a motive to make him undervalue all other things, to be at him: "For the excellency of the knowledge," &c.

3. The bare knowledge of Christ's excellency and worth is not sufficient for righteousness and salvation, except the heart by faith fasten upon, and adhere to him, being so known; for the word "knowledge," according to the custom of the Hebrew language, includeth the acts of the will, and affections following upon it, Psa. i. 6, and so it is afterwards expounded in these words, "that I may gain him, be found in him, having his righteousness."

4. He that hath taken his confidence from off his own righteousness, and placed it wholly upon Christ, may and should plead interest in Christ, and boast of him as his: so doth Paul; "The knowledge of Christ, my Lord."

5. A man will not attain to quit his own righteousness, and his other props of vain confidence, to betake himself wholly unto Christ, until he be made to do it; the law and a awakened conscience must drive him out of those lurking holes, before he quit them, Rom. vii. 9: hence, he saith, "for whom I have suffered the loss of all things," that is, as the merchant suffereth the loss of his goods, by casting them away in the time of a storm, which is sore against his heart if he could do otherwise, and were not through fear of the loss of his life driven unto it: the original word signifieth such a suffering of loss as this.

6. So excellent is Christ, that all things compared with him, and set in opposition to him, have that much of baseness in them, that hardly a word base enough can be found to express them: so he counteth, even "all things," compared with and opposed to him, not only "loss," but "dung."

7. So complete is that satisfaction which is to be found in Christ, when he is thoroughly ventured upon for righteousness and salvation, that the man which hath so done, needs not, yea, will not repent himself of so doing; or, for undervaluing, quitting, and trampling upon every thing which impeded him from closing with him: for Paul, who had suffered the loss of all things for him, taking a review of what he had done, seeth no reason to recede from it; and therefore in the mean time saith, "I do count them but dung."

8. Our closing with Christ by faith for righteousness and salvation, having denied confidence unto any other thing besides him, is a grace, the acts whereof would be often repeated, avowed, and stood to; because it groweth and riseth higher the more it is exercised: so Paul in these two verses, repeateth it thrice, and his speech doth still rise by degrees; "Those I counted loss, yea, I count all things but loss, and do count them but dung," saith he.

9. There is no gaining of Christ and his righteousness, except we renounce our own first: and the more of loss and damage we see in our own works, parts, and privileges, the more fully and freely the heart be taken off from relying on those, there is the more ready access to close with Christ; and thereby to get all that is in him made our own: for Paul, by counting all those loss, and not otherways, gaineth Christ: "That I may gain Christ."

VER. 9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

He hath shown one advantage by renouncing confidence in himself, to wit, his gaining Christ: here is a second, that hereby in the day when God shall search sinners, chiefly in the day of general judgment, he should be found by God, incorporated in Christ: and sentence should pass upon him, not according to his own inherent righteousness, which consisteth in personal obedience unto the law, but according to that imputed righteousness of Christ's, freely gifted by God and received by faith.

DOCTRINES.

1. It shall go well with those, and those only, in the day of exact search and trial, especially in the day of general judgment, who shall be found in Christ: for this is the great advantage of his counting all things loss, "that I may be found in Christ."

2. Whoever hath once sincerely closed with Christ by faith, shall constantly remain united to and ingrafted in him: for the apostle supposeth, that once having gained Christ, he shall be found in him at the last day: "And be found in him."

3. As there is no comparing before God in the great day to a man's own safety and comfort, without some righteousness of one sort or other; so there is no inherent righteousness consisting in a man's own personal obedience unto the law, which can secure him from the dint of God's anger and justice: therefore, saith he, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law," that is, not relying on it, as that which would commend him to God: and all righteousness inherent, even that which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, is called "our own," because it is really in us, 2 Pet. i. 8, and we ourselves, being wrought upon by God, do really concur for the working of it, ver. 12.

4. Not only works done in obedience to the ceremonial law, or by men in their unrenewed state, are useless as to the justification of a sinner; but even those also, which are performed by the truly godly and regenerate, in obedience to the moral law: for Paul quitteth all that righteousness, which could be called his in the mean time, when he had been now of a long time renewed: "Not having mine own righteousness."

5. That righteousness which can sufficiently secure a man in the great day, from the dint of God's wrath and justice, is only Christ's, to wit, that righteousness which was inherent only in

him, and but imputed unto us, Rom. v. 19. "That which is through the faith of Christ," saith he, that is, faith laying hold on Christ.

6. This righteousness which can secure a lost sinner from the stroke of justice, hath relation unto God in a particular manner, as being the righteousness of that person, who is God, Jer. xxiii. 6, that only righteousness which is accepted of God, Matt. iii. 17; and the imputation whereof to unrighteous sinners, being found out by the only wise God, Matt. xi. 25. "The righteousness which is of God."

7. There is no gain to be had from this righteousness, by a lost sinner, except he lay hold on it by faith: therefore it is called "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

8. The grace of faith doth justify, and make a sinner righteous; not as it is our work, for so it is a part of our righteousness which is by the law, seeing the law commandeth faith, 1 John iii. 23; but as it apprehendeth Jesus Christ and his righteousness: "Not having mine own righteousness by the law, but that which is of God by faith," saith he.

VER. 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

A third advantage to be reaped by renouncing confidence in all things without Christ, is, that hereby he should, and in part did experimentally know the worth that is in Christ, and find the power of his resurrection, raising him from the death of sin to the life of grace, as also somewhat of that comfort and joy which is in suffering for him, and with him in his mystical body; and so should be made conform to Christ's death, as holding forth a resemblance of it.

DOCTRINES.

1. Besides that knowledge of faith which believers have of Christ, whereby credit is given to the word, because of the authority of him whose word it is, John xx. 29; there is an experimental knowledge, whereby believers from his effectual working in them, do find and taste him to be that which the word affirmeth of him, Psa. xxxiv. 8; it is the knowledge the apostle here aspireth unto, "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection."

2. The more a man attaineth to see the loss and vanity of all things without, and in comparison with Christ, and to rely wholly upon Christ, he will attain to the more experimental knowledge and lively sense of the worth and power which is in Christ: for this is one advantage which he reapeth by counting all things loss for Christ; "That I may know him," to wit, experimentally.

3. To rely wholly upon the righteousness of Christ for justification, and nothing at all upon our own, conduceth much to the increase of holiness, and in no ways doth prejudge it, Rom. iii. 31; for the fruit of not having his own righteousness, but Christ's, is his knowing by experience the virtue of Christ's resurrection, in raising him

from the death of sin to the life of grace: "And the power of his resurrection."

4. The sufferings which believers do undergo for Christ, and for his church, are a partaking with Christ in those his sufferings which he still endureth in his mystical body the church: for so much is taught by those words, "the fellowship of his sufferings," to wit, which he endureth in his mystical body the church. (See Col. i. 24.)

5. As justified persons are not exempted from sad sufferings, such as others of Christ's mystical body, the church, are exercised with; so they enjoy a desirable sweetness in them when they meet with them: Paul expecteth this, else he would not have desired "to know the fellowship of his sufferings."

6. The experience and taste of this desirable sweetness is only felt by him, who by denying his own righteousness, and laying hold upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, hath made his peace with God; for the fruit of Paul's counting all things loss to gain Christ, is his knowing by experience that sweetness which is in "the communion of his sufferings."

7. A holy man patiently undergoing a cross for Christ, is an evident resemblance of Christ's death, who notwithstanding that he was sorely assaulted by men, Luke iv. 29, and devils, Matt. iv. 3, yet remained holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, Isa. liii. 9; preferring his Father's glory, and good of believers to his own ease and immunity from sufferings, Matt. xxvi. 39; so Paul, by partaking of his sufferings, should be made "conformable to his death."

8. This may make the most bitter cross lovely, and in a sort desirable unto an holy man, that hereby he is made the more like unto his Lord and Master: for this maketh Paul aim at the fellowship of his sufferings, even that thereby he was to be "made conformable unto his death."

VER. 11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Here is a fourth advantage to be reaped by renouncing confidence in all things but Christ, to wit, hereby, and by exercising himself in holiness, and patient suffering for Christ (whereof ver. 10) he should, though with much difficulty, attain unto the glorious resurrection of the just, and have his portion in it: for he meaneth here the resurrection proper to believers only, as 1 Thess. iv. 14, &c.

DOCTRINES.

1. The gain of closing with Christ and his righteousness, reacheth further than to any thing within time; it accompanieth a man in death, preserveth his dust in the grave until the last day; at the which time it shall raise him up, and make him partaker of the glorious resurrection of the just: for Paul propoundeth all this unto himself, as the fruit of his closing with Christ, while he saith, "I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

2. However our closing with Christ's righteousness by faith giveth a right to, and an interest

in that blessed resurrection, and all the glory which is then to be imparted unto believers, John iii. 36; yet there is a way of holiness, and patient enduring of the cross, by which believers must walk unto it: for he propoundeth the knowledge of Christ's resurrection and fellowship of his sufferings, ver. 10, as the way leading to it: "If by any means," &c.

3. As there is no small difficulty for any of the lost sons of Adam, to attain unto this blessed resurrection; so where the reality of it is believed, difficulties will but kindle desire, and quicken our diligence to be at it: for the apostle, "If by any means," importeth not his doubt of the thing, or of his partaking of it; only hereby he would set out the great difficulty of attaining unto it, together with his ardent desire, and unwearied diligence to be at it: "If by any means," saith he.

VER. 12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Having shown the advantage flowing from closing with Christ, he holdeth forth more of his own practice, and thereby sheweth the duty of a man already ingrafted in Christ, which is from the sense of his own short-coming in the knowledge of Christ, his imperfection in grace, and conformity with Christ to endeavour constant progress, and to aim at no less than perfection in all those; that being the scope which the believer is called to aim at, when he is first laid hold upon by Christ in his effectual calling. Now the apostle propoundeth this his practice to obviate a mistake which might arise from his former speech, as if he had been perfectly instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and fully conform unto him already, and so needed not to busy himself about Christ further, but might aspire after a higher perfection by conformity with the ceremonial law, as the false apostles did.

DOCTRINES.

1. So ingenious is error and apt to lay hold upon any thing which may make for its own defence, that it will take advantage to shelter itself by that which is spoken in direct refutation of it: for as is said, Paul seeth a necessity to guard what he hath presently spoken against the urgers of circumcision, lest thereby they should have fastened upon him that which would have made for their advantage: "Not as if I had already attained," saith he.

2. They who have made greatest progress in the knowledge of Christ, and in conformity with him, are far short of what they should be; so was Paul. "Not as though I had already attained."

3. Believers ought to be sensible of this their imperfection, and sometimes also acknowledge it; that hereby they may be kept humble, made to aspire unto further growth; and others may be preserved from dangerous mistakes of them, or of the high esteem which otherways they may seem to have of themselves: so doth Paul. "Not that I have already attained."

4. Then are we rightly sensible of our falling

short of what we should be, when we are not thereby discouraged, but rather incited to make swifter progress toward the mark; "But I follow after," saith he.

5. Though perfection in holiness be not attainable in this life, yet we are to aim at no less: "Paul followed after, that he might apprehend," to wit, that perfection which was yet wanting.

6. That there is any motion towards that which is spiritually good, proceedeth wholly from Jesus Christ, whose grace doth first lay hold upon us in our effectual calling, when we were dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, and having infused principles of a new life in us, we are made to bestir ourselves in the way of holiness; Paul is first "apprehended of Christ," and then he "followeth after to apprehend."

VER. 13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I *do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14. I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

He doth again acknowledge his own short-coming, and sheweth also his constant endeavour after perfection, which he enlargeth and cleareth by a similitude taken from runners in a race, who without looking behind, to count how much of the way is already past, are carried on with such a vehement desire to promote in the way, that they bend their bodies forward, having their heart, eye, and whole course straight toward the end of the race, until they attain unto it: thus was Paul carried on in his Christian course, being encouraged by the hopes of the rich reward unto which he was called, and which was purchased for him by Jesus Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is much divine wisdom and prudence required in ministers, as in all the duties of their calling, so especially, while they are about to fasten conviction of guiltiness upon any; lest they do irritate their corruptions instead of curing them. Thus the apostle wisely points out the vanity of their conceit, who looked upon themselves as having already attained unto perfection in the knowledge of Christ, not by his express taxing of their pride and vanity, but by professing his own humility: "I count not myself to have apprehended."

2. They who have made furthest progress in the knowledge of Christ, are usually most sensible of their own imperfections, and most forward in the acknowledgment of them, when God's glory, and the edification of others call them unto it: so Paul, who, ver. 10, had nothing so much in his desires as to know Christ, and so doubtless knew much of him, yet standeth not again and again to acknowledge his own short-coming and ignorance: "I count not myself to have apprehended."

3. Progress in the knowledge of Christ, and holiness, is to be minded seriously and above all

other things, not superficially, and upon the by only: so it was Paul's "one thing:" "this one thing I mind," or do.

4. The approved exercise of a Christian endeavouring progress in the way to heaven, is much like to the carriage of those who are running in a race. First, as the runner casteth not back his eye to reckon how much of the way is already past; so the Christian who would advance to any purpose, though he may take a review of what he hath already done, so as therein not only to see his own short-comings for humiliation, but also to see matter of praise unto God, and encouragement unto himself, 1 Cor. xv. 10; yet he is not so to be taken up with it, as to rest upon it, be puffed up with conceit because of it, as if he had already done enough, or any other way which may retard him in his further progress; in which respects Paul did "forget those things which were behind," as if he had done nothing. Secondly, as the runner is most taken up with that part of the way which he is yet to run, and bendeth himself forward in it; so the Christian who would make progress, must be much in counting what of his way is yet before him; what sins are yet to be mortified; what duties are yet almost untouched; what hard exercises he may yet be called to undergo; and the more he seeth of that kind, he is to take the more pains for advancing forward: so was Paul "reaching forth unto those things which were before." Thirdly, as the runner holdeth his eye upon the mark, and steereth his whole course in order to it, without turning aside, or halting, because of difficulties in the way; so the Christian who would make progress, must fix his eye upon the end of his race, which is perfection in holiness, levelling all his actions and endeavours at that mark, pressing forward through all difficulties, discouragements and stumbling-blocks which are in the way betwixt him and it: so did Paul; "I press toward the mark."

5. As the thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward do add spirits to the runner, making him run more swiftly; so there is a rich prize, a free reward of grace, though not of merit, to wit, heaven and glory, Rom. vi. 23, which the Christian who would make progress to purpose, should have much in his thoughts; that thereby he may be heartened against all hardships and discouragements, faintings and failings, which he will be assaulted with, and tempted unto: so did Paul; "I press for the prize of my high calling."

6. Though heaven and glory be given as a reward to those only, who continue in their Christian course until they come unto the end of the race; yet it is not merited by their running and persevering: for as it dependeth upon their effectual calling, which hath not its rise from man's low endeavours, but from above, even from God's high grace; so it is conveyed unto them through the merits of Jesus Christ: thus it is "the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ."

ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

In the third part of the chapter he exhorteth even those of them who either had made, or seemed unto themselves to have made, furthest progress, to follow his example, and be of the same mind with him in the particulars before mentioned: and because some of them being seduced by the false apostles, were of a contrary mind in some things, he giveth them ground of hope that God, who had brought them to the knowledge of the gospel, would reclaim them from this their error, and discover unto them the danger of it, ver. 15; but withal he exhorteth them unto unity and orderly walking, according to the canon and rule of Scripture, in those things wherein they were yet harmonious, keeping mutual love and holding off further rents than were already made.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though none can attain unto absolute perfection in holiness, yet as there are several degrees in grace, so there is diversity of growth among Christians; some are but weak, *infirm*, and babes in Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2; others are come to greater ripeness, endowed with a larger measure of grace, and confirmed by much experience, who being compared with the former, are here called perfect: "Let us, as many as be perfect."

2. The greatest perfection attainable in this life, is to renounce all confidence in ourselves, to rely wholly upon Christ, and from the sense of our own imperfection in grace, to be constantly aspiring to a greater measure: for this he prescribeth unto the choicest Christians, to be exercised in; "Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded."

3. The approved exercises of holy men mentioned in Scripture, are a clear glass wherein we are to see our duty and strong encouraging motives to make us go about it; examples being of more force than bare and naked precepts: so Paul draweth an argument from his own practice: "Let us therefore," &c., that is, being sensible of small progress, and of a great way yet before us, let us press forward: for so was he minded, as he sheweth in the preceding verse, and so would he have them minded in this verse.

4. There are usually some within the visible church, who, being bemisted with error, do not come up to give thorough assent unto all divine truths: Paul supposeth so much; "If in any thing ye be otherwise minded."

5. We are to deal more tenderly with some of those who are bemisted with error than with others: as first, we are to keep charity towards them, and express our charity of them, that God who hath begun to enlighten them in other things, would discover unto them those truths, whereof they are yet ignorant: such is the apostle's charity here, "God shall reveal even this

VER. 15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing

unto you:" even this, as he had revealed other things already. Secondly, they are to be waited on patiently, without proceeding to the severe exercise of discipline, until some competent time at least be given, wherein through God's blessing upon their own endeavours and the labours of others with them, they may attain to the knowledge of those truths whereof they are ignorant; or otherwise be made inexcusable. This is supposed to have been Paul's mind toward those to whom he speaketh, "the Lord will reveal even this unto you."

6. Every one who erreth from truth, is not to be used with this tenderness; as first, not seducers, but those who are seduced; for the apostle has spoken, verse 3, and doth speak afterward otherways of seducers. Secondly, it is only those who are seduced, not in fundamental truths, which are absolutely necessary; but in others, which are not so necessary: for the apostle supposeth those, whom he would have thus used, to have attained unto the knowledge of fundamental truths according to the canon of Scripture: "Nevertheless, in what we have attained," &c. So that their error did lie only in some circumstantial truths relating to those greater ones; as he seemeth also to import, while he saith, "if in any thing, any be otherwise minded:" besides that it appeareth from the body of the epistle, the false apostles had prevailed with few or none in this church to draw them on to their grossest errors. Thirdly, as their error is only in inferior truths; so they must not be so devoted unto their own opinions, as, from a desire to propagate them, to rend the church, and make schisms in it: but are to walk in a joint and orderly practice with others in those things wherein they do agree: not creating strife and division, whether in affection or practice, about those things wherein they differ; for this may be taken as a condition of the forbearance to be given, and of God's revealing further unto them: "Nevertheless," or only, "if we walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing." So there is no ground here for a boundless toleration of all heretics, sect-masters, seducers of others; nor yet to all those who are seduced, except their carriage do evidence them to be studious both of truth and peace.

7. As it is only God who can reveal truth unto those who are overtaken with error, by his blessing upon ordinary means made use of for that purpose: so there are promising grounds of hope that he will do so unto some, to wit, those unto whom he hath discovered many soul-saving truths already, and who are labouring by their orderly walking according unto those truths, to edify both themselves and others: Paul's hope is, that "God will reveal even this unto them;" not by any immediate revelation or any other way without the word; but by his blessing upon the word preached, and their own endeavours, Isa. viii. 20. And that because he had revealed much unto them already, imported in the words "even this," or, "also this," and withal subjoineth the condition, "whereunto we have attained, let us walk," to wit, unitedly and orderly, as soldiers keeping rank without disturbing one another.

8. The church of Christ ought not upon every

difference of judgment, to be rent in schisms and factions, setting up a church against a church, or, using cross endeavours for undermining and down-bearing of one another; but unity and orderly practice according to an unconverted rule, so far as is possible, is to be kept notwithstanding of different judgments: for this the apostle exhorteth unto; "Let us walk by the same rule."

9. Upon divided practice, because of different opinions in a church, there doth necessarily follow further division and rending, both in judgment and affections: for Paul having exhorted unto joint practice, he subjoineth, "Let us mind the same thing," that is, let us keep unity both of affection and judgment, to wit, in those things wherein we do yet agree; importing, this cannot be, except there be a joint practice.

VER. 17. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.

He repeateth the former exhortation that they would follow his example; and encourageth them from this, that it was not his alone; many faithful servants of Christ did walk as he did; whose example he propoundeth unto them as a mark to aim at.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the examples of holy men, registered in Scripture, are to be imitated by us, to wit, so far as they have been followers of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1, so we are to be "followers together of them;" every one helping up another, and far from falling in rents among ourselves, under pretence of giving respect to men, some more to one, and others more to another, 1 Cor. i. 12; this the apostle aimeth at, while he saith, "be followers together of me."

2. As there are some whose steps are to be followed, and whose way in order thereunto is to be diligently eyed, as the scope which the archer aimeth at, (for so the Greek word rendered "mark," doth signify;) so it is not every one we should so imitate, but those only who have walked in the steps of the holy apostles, and other choice servants of Christ: "Mark them," saith he, "which walk so," but how? "as ye have us for an example."

3. However the way of God be in itself lovely, and worthy to be chosen, Psa. xix. 7, though few or none did walk in it, Josh. xxiv. 15; yet that this way is made a beaten path by the multitude of those who have made it their choice, is no small encouragement and motive to make us walk in it; every example being as a standing witness to confirm from experience, that all which Scripture speaketh of that way, is real truth, Heb. xii. 1; for so he draweth an encouragement from this, that not only he, but divers others did walk in that way, "Mark them that walk so."

VER. 18. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weep-

ing, *that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ :*

19. Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

He giveth reasons to enforce the exhortation. First, there were many whose example was not to be followed, to wit, the false apostles : from following of whom that he may deter them, as he had often before, so he doth now in great grief (as seeing the church of Christ pestered with such false teachers) point them forth in their blackest colours : first, as being enemies to the cross of Christ, because they opposed the virtue of Christ's sufferings, by which alone salvation is obtained, Gal. v. 2 ; and because they pressed the observation of the Levitical ceremonies, that gratifying the Jews thereby, they might shift Christ's cross, or persecution for the gospel, Gal. vi. 12. Secondly, eternal destruction should be their reward, if they persisted in that damnable doctrine without repentance. Thirdly, they were beastly belly-gods, as being acted not from a principle of love to God or to the salvation of men, but their own fleshly appetite, that they might have wherewith to fill their bellies, Rom. xvi. 18. Fourthly, they gloried in their wickedness, and in the multitude of those whom they had perverted, Gal. vi. 13, whereof they should rather have been ashamed, and which in the end should turn unto their shame. And finally, all their endeavours reached no higher than things earthly, riches, honour, pleasures, applause, and such like ; while as heaven, and things heavenly (however much pretended unto) were little minded by them : and so he leadeth them to gather, that such were men not worthy to be followed.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord doth sometimes suffer seducers to multiply in a church, thus to punish the small respect which hath been given to truth, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, and that those who are approved may be made manifest, 1 Cor. xi. 19 ; for, "many walk," &c.

2. The abounding of such seducers ought not in reason to detract any thing from the respect which is due unto sincere and orthodox preachers ; yea, such will be the more esteemed of by all sincere lovers of truth ; for Paul maketh this a reason why such men as he should be imitated : "Be followers together of me," &c., ver. 17 ; "for many walk," saith he, "that are enemies," &c.

3. It is the duty of Christ's faithful ministers to give frequent warning unto the Lord's people of their hazard from spreaders of errors and wicked seducers, pointing them out in the blackest colours, that people may not be ensnared by them ; so doth Paul here : "Of whom I have told you, and now tell you, they are enemies of the cross of Christ."

4. Whatever ministers do of this kind, ought not to flow from hatred or evil-will to the persons of men, a desire of venting reproaches, petulancy of spirit, or such like, Jude 9, but from pure zeal

to the church's weal, and from grief of heart to see the church of Christ pestered by them : thus was it with Paul ; "Of whom," saith he, "I do now tell you, even weeping."

5. In times of trial for truth, there will not be some wanting (and those in no small reputation for piety and parts) who are carried on to embrace those opinions in the matter of religion, which lie furthest off the dint of persecution, even although these opinions be erroneous and destructive to the doctrine of the gospel ; for so, and in those respects, those men were "enemies to the cross of Christ."

6. Not only doth profanity and vice draw down destruction and wrath upon those who live in them, Col. iii. 6, but also errors against truth are damnable, and bring destruction, if not repeated of, chiefly to the malicious authors and factious spreaders of them, for base designs, faired [glossed] over with fair pretences, Rom. xvi. 17, 18. So saith the apostle of those masters of error, "whose end is destruction."

7. That is interpretatively a man's God, which is the last end of all his actions, and upon which all his care, his thoughts, and endeavours run most, whether it be a man's belly, the world, his credit, or friends : hence it is said, "whose God is their belly."

8. There are many who pretend fair for God, and the good of souls, and yet will be really found to be but self-seekers, making a net of a fair outside, to catch worldly pleasures, riches, and honours : and this is most frequently to be found in those who spread errors : "Whose god is their belly, they mind earthly things."

9. The chief endeavour of those who walk in a sinful way, (chiefly in a course of error,) and the thing which they hunt most after, as their highest credit and glory, is, to have many carried along with them in it ; for this was their glory here spoken of : "Whose glory is in their shame."

10. The Lord shall sooner or later make that same very thing, wherein such men glory most, to be their shame, either by making them to be truly ashamed of it, as a fruit of their repentance, Rom. vi. 21, or by rubbing shame upon them for it here, or hereafter, as the just reward of their sin, Hos. iv. 7 ; in which respects he affirmeth of them, "whose glory is in their shame."

VER. 20. For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ :

21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Here is a second reason exciting them to imitate the apostle, and such as he was. Their conversation and expected reward were much different from that of the false apostles ; and therefore as the latter were to be eschewed, the former were to be followed. As to their conversation, it was not on things earthly, but in heaven, and that

because Christ their head, their glory, their happiness, is there, whom they did expect to come one day from thence, not as a terrible judge, but as a tender-hearted Saviour, ver. 20. And as for their reward, it should not be destruction, but salvation and glory; their bodies (for the present, vile, humble, and low, as being obnoxious to death, corruption, and a deluge of miseries, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43,) should be changed by the Lord Christ, so that being freed from these base qualities, and endued with the contrary glorious ones, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, they should be made conform to Christ's glorious body. And lest any should look on such a change as impossible, he leadeth them unto the consideration of Christ's divine power, whereby he will destroy death, and the grave, and subject all things unto himself; and so can easily work that glorious change in our vile bodies, ver. 21.

DOCTRINES.

1. The conversation of those who would have themselves propounded as patterns for imitation by others, ought to be such as that of the apostle was; who, exciting the Philippians to follow him, giveth this for a reason, "our conversation is in heaven."

2. Believers have right to heaven, as to their city, faith being the burgess-ticket which giveth an interest in the privileges of it, John iii. 36: "We have our conversation in heaven," or, we do live as free burgesses of that city, so will the original bear.

3. The angels are therefore to converse and live as free denizens of that city, so that though they be mixed with hypocrites, Mat. xiii. 30, and carry about earthly bodies, 2 Cor. v. 1, standing in need of earthly sustentation, and subject also to the common calamities of an earthly life, 1 Cor. xv. 44; yet with their heart and affections they are to be aspiring daily towards heaven, Col. iii. 1; living in all things so as it becometh those who have present right unto it, and one day shall get full possession of it, 1 John iii. 3, for so lived the apostle: "We have our conversation in heaven," or, we do live as free burgesses of that city.

4. Jesus Christ, in his bodily presence, is now in heaven, and not in earth; for, saith he, "from whence we look for a Saviour."

5. Jesus Christ at the end of time is to come from heaven, and judge the world, 2 Tim. iv. 1: "From whence we look," &c.

6. This second coming of his, although it be abhorred and hated by wicked atheists, Acts xxiv. 25, he being to come unto them as a terrible judge, 2 Thess. i. 8, yet it is the matter of the godly's expectation; a thing hoped for, and much longed after by them: "From whence also we look."

7. The reason why his second coming is so much looked for by the godly is, because he is to come, not as a sin-pursuing judge unto them, but as a Saviour with perfect salvation, and healing under his wings: "We look for a Saviour." (See Heb. ix. 28.)

8. The consideration of this, that Christ is in heaven, and to come as a Saviour from thence, hath an adamantine virtue to draw up the

thoughts and affections of the believer thither: for this is given as a reason why their conversation was in heaven; "From whence we expect a Saviour," saith he.

9. Our bodies now since the fall, Gen. iii. 19, are vile and base, liable to death and corruption, to several sores and sicknesses: "Our vile body."

10. That vileness and baseness which is in our mortal bodies is properly ours, as being contracted by our sin, by which they were brought down from that glory wherein they were created, Rom. v. 12. Thus "our vile body," or, (as it is in the original,) "bodies of our vileness;" the vileness is more ours than the bodies are.

11. The bodies of believers, however they be now vile and base, and subject to as many miseries as the bodies of others are; yea, and are liable to the cross for Christ, Matt. x. 18, which the bodies of the wicked are not, Gal. vi. 12, yet Christ in the last day shall work a glorious change in them, a change not in their substance and proportion of members; for we shall still have an organic body with distinct members, John xix. 27, but delivered from those base and low qualities which sin hath subjected them unto, and adorned with the contrary glorious qualities, such as immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 42, and splendour, 1 Cor. xv. 43, impassibility, 1 Cor. xv. 44, and agility and lightness, 1 Thess. iv. 17. So that neither sickness, pain, hunger, nor death, shall be able to assault our glorified bodies, Matt. xxii. 30. This is the change here spoken of: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

12. Though the body of Christ now in heaven be glorious, being adorned with as much glory as a created body can be capable of; yet it is not endued with the essential properties of God, so as to be omnipotent, or omnipresent, (as the ubiquitaries do affirm:) "For our bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" and yet none can rationally assert, that they shall be adorned with any of the essential properties of God.

13. The resurrection of our bodies, and transforming of them thus gloriously after they shall be turned unto dust, and eaten with worms, Job xix. 26, as it is a thing almost incredible, and to flesh and blood wholly impossible, Acts xvii. 32, so the consideration and faith of divine omnipotency, which is engaged to bring it about, will make all doubts of that kind vanish, as knowing nothing is impossible unto God: so Paul, that he may confirm them in the faith of this great point, leadeth them to the power of God, "according to his working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

14. There is nothing within the reach of divine omnipotency which shall be left unassayed, rather than the believer's glory, both in soul and body, should remain uncompleted: for while he saith, "whereby he is able:" it is supposed, that if it be within the compass of divine ability, it shall be done.

CHAPTER IV.

In the first part of this chapter, Paul exhorteth the Philippians unto some Christian virtues, to wit, to constancy, ver. 1; to concord, ver. 2, 3; to rejoice in the Lord, ver. 4; to moderation of mind, ver. 5; to beware of anxious, heart-cutting, diffident care, and to give themselves to prayer and praises, ver. 6; for so they should have much of God's peace, ver. 7; and, generally, to every thing which was praiseworthy, ver. 8; which he enforceth from his own example, and the fruit which should follow hereupon, ver. 9.

In the second part, he commendeth them for their benevolence towards him in his strait, excusing the delay, ver. 10; and cleareth himself from dejectedness of spirit under want, ver. 11—13; and yet showeth their gratuity was acceptable, ver. 14; which he amplifieth by mentioning their liberality towards him in former times, ver. 15, 16; and purgeth himself from an indirect intention to excite them to the bestowing of more, ver. 17; showing what he had already received did abundantly satisfy him, ver. 18; for which their gratuity, he promiseth unto them a recompense from God, ver. 19.

In the third part he concludeth the Epistle, first, with a doxology, ver. 20; secondly, with some mutual salutations, ver. 21, 22; and thirdly, with his usual farewell wish, ver. 23.

VER. 1. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

From what Paul hath said in the former chapter, he inferreth a vehement exhortation, enforced by a number of affectionate compellations, that they would remain constant in the doctrine and practice of the gospel, so as they had done hitherto, and as he had presently prescribed, chap. iii.

DOCTRINES.

1. So ready are we to weary in well-doing, Gal. v. 7, so unwearied is the tempter in his assaulting of us, what by reiterating old temptations, what by presenting us with new ones, 1 Pet. v. 8, that even those who for a long time have given great proof of their constancy both in profession of truth and practice of duties, are not so far beyond the reach of backsliding, but they stand in need of frequent and vehement exhortations to make them stand on their guard against it; so Paul exhorteth those Philippians to constancy, notwithstanding they had already given large proof of it; "So stand fast in the Lord."

2. The faith of glory, and rich reward which is laid up to those who persevere unto the end, is a strong motive unto constancy and perseverance; so from what the apostle spake in the close of chap. iii., of that glorious change to be wrought upon the bodies of believers, he inferreth, "so stand fast."

3. As a people's profiting by the ministry of the word, ought to endear them unto a faithful pastor, so a minister may, without imputation of

flattery, make it known unto the people, and that in the most pathetic way, how much they are esteemed of by him, that hereby he may excite them to further progress. And this use only should be made by people of the approbation of their faithful discerning pastors, or of any other whose approbation they think worthy to put a price upon. Thus the apostle here gives them a number of affectionate compellations, all of them breathing forth his respect and love unto them, such as "brethren," as being professors of the same faith; "dearly beloved," being such as for their piety had much room in his heart; "and longed for," his absence from whom was his burden; "my joy," the remembrance of whom made him sing under all his sufferings; and "my crown," they were as an ornament unto him, his glory and diadem, being gained to Christ by his ministry, and having remained constant, when others had fallen away.

VER. 2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

3. And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellow-labourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

He speaketh to two women, who being of some note in that church, did in some things, as appeareth, relating to religion, differ as well the one from the other, as both of them from the doctrine publicly professed in that church: them he exhorteth, that laying aside their contention and strife, they would endeavour peace and unity betwixt themselves, such as God would approve of, ver. 2. And because divisions of that kind are not easily composed, he exhorteth some one of his once fellow-labourers in that church, to contribute his endeavours for helping them to union, because they had been useful to him in their stations, while he was preaching the gospel, and planting a church at Philippi, with one Clement, and some other private Christians; all which in charity he did judge to be truly gracious, and in the number of God's elect children.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of pastors to instruct, exhort, rebuke, and comfort, not only the whole church in general, but also particular persons by name, as occasion offereth, and their necessity requireth; so doth Paul, "I beseech Euodias. and beseech Syntyche."

2. Difference of judgment among professors, in things relating to religion, is of dangerous consequence, as being an occasion of strife and discord, of alienation of heart and affections, 2 Cor. xii. 20, as causing hurtful diversions from that which should be our main work, to waste our precious time, and the edge of our spirits upon things less necessary, 1 Tim. i. 4. Paul looks upon this difference as worthy to be taken notice of, even by an apostle; "I beseech," saith he.

3. It is very casual for such differences to fall in among professors, who have been otherwise pious and useful in the Lord's work; thus Euodias and Syntyche, who helped Paul in the gospel, falleth at odds among themselves; "I beseech Euodias," &c.

4. Peace and unity in the church, and among all the members of the church, is a thing much to be studied for and sought after; "I beseech they be of the same mind."

5. But by all means it would be seen to, that the composing of the church's differences be an union in the Lord, and such as he will approve of; so "he beseecheth them to be of one mind," but, "in the Lord."

6. We ought to make use of our familiarity with, and interest in others, to set them upon employments honourable unto God, and profitable unto the church of Christ, and the true members thereof, so far as their station will permit, and their abilities can reach; so Paul maketh use of his entireness with one above the rest, (whom he calleth his "true yoke-fellow," because, as appears, of their being jointly employed in the work of the ministry, as oxen drawing under one yoke,) to set him upon the reconciling of those two who were at a distance, "and I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow."

7. As church divisions, though easily fallen into, Acts xv. 37, &c., are not easily cured, so it is the duty of all, who have power and parts, to employ them all for the curing of them, and this especially, when the scandalous rent is among such who have been reputed gracious, and have proved steadable to the work of God in their several stations; hence he exhorteth to help those women to union, because they had "laboured with him in the gospel."

8. As the gospel, when it first cometh in power to a place, meeteth with no small opposition, so it is the duty, not only of ministers, but also of private Christians, and that of both sexes, keeping still their own stations, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, to contribute their uttermost for making of the gospel successful; so did they at Philippi, "who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers." The word rendered "laboured," signifieth to strive as wrestlers, who make use of all their strength. What their labour was, is not expressed, but certainly it was such as became them in their stations.

9. The Lord knoweth who are his with as great certainty, as a man knoweth those of his family whose names he hath written in a book; so much is imported by this phrase, "whose names are written in the book of life;" not that God hath or standeth in need of any such book for the help of his memory; the speech is only metaphorical, bearing this much, that God hath fore-ordained them to life, and so knoweth certainly they shall be saved, as if their names were all enrolled. (See 2 Tim. ii. 19.)

10. Though none can pass a certain and infallible judgment upon others, whether they belong to the election of grace or not, Rom. xiv. 4, yet there may, and ought to be a judgment of charity passed upon all, and every one of such, as elected and chosen, whom we see constant in the doc-

trine of faith, studying to be holy themselves, and contributing their utmost for promoting the work of God among others; for Paul, from the judgment of charity, pronounceth of such, "whose names are written in the book of life."

VER. 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

He exhorteth most earnestly that they would not suffer themselves to be drawn off from that necessary duty of rejoicing in the Lord, pressed chap. iii. 1; but that under all conditions, and at all times, they would make conscience of it.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not only the Lord's allowance, but also his command unto his people, which they are to obey, under hazard of disobedience, "to rejoice in the Lord;" that is, from the consideration of the excellency of Christ in himself, Cant. v. 10, &c., and his usefulness unto them, Ps. cxviii. 1, together with their interest in him, Cant. ii. 16, and the observation of his providence and care towards them, 1 Sam. xvii. 37, to keep their own hearts not only free from anxiety and discouragement, but feeding also upon the sense and sweetness which floweth from all those considerations; for this is the duty of "rejoicing in the Lord," which he here presseth.

2. This is a duty constantly to be made conscience of under all cases and conditions, whether prosperous or adverse; there being always grounds of rejoicing to the believer, though not in the world, nor in himself, yet in the Lord, and in what the word holdeth forth of him, John xvi. 33, if he by his own untender walking, or misbelieving discouragement, do not mar his access to the right use-making of those grounds, Ps. xlii. 11; "Rejoice always," saith he.

3. It is not easy to work up the heart to the conscientious practice of this duty, especially at all times; hence he doubleth the exhortation, thereby pointing out how averse we are from this duty; "Rejoice always, and again I say, rejoice."

VER. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand.

He further exhorteth them, in all their affairs, to the exercise of moderation, whereby they should rather remit somewhat of what was their right according to the rule of strict justice, than do any real hurt unto others, and that because of God's presence, to wit, by his providence presently, and by his second coming to judge the world, before it be long.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christians not always to exact the rigour of what in strict law they may claim unto, whether in seeking reparation of injuries, Col. iii. 13, and repayment of debts, Ex. xxii. 25, 26, or in use-making of recreations, and any of their allowed liberties, Gal. v. 13; but are to remit somewhat of their right, as the necessity of their neighbour, Ex. xxii. 25, 26; or his edification calleth for it, Rom. xiv. 21, for

this is the moderation here exhorted unto: "Let your moderation be known."

2. However, Christians are not to hunt after applause or vainglory, by setting forth the good things which are in them to the public view, Matt. vi. 1, 6, 18, yet they are not, under pretence of eschewing that evil, or the suspicion of it, to cover all they do from the view of others, but are bound to make their good works manifest, that others therein may see their duty, and have matter of blessing God on their behalf. (See Matt. v. 16.) "Let your moderation be known," &c.

3. The fore-mentioned advantages by making our good works manifest, are most effectually produced, not so much by speaking of the good which we do, as when the work speaketh for itself unto those who do behold it, and chiefly unto such as find benefit by it; thus they were to "make their moderation known unto all men," to wit, by giving real proof of it.

4. Although these duties, flowing from intimate society and near relations, be due only to such who stand under those relations unto us, 1 Tim. v. 8, yet none, whether good or bad, are to be excluded from their just interest in those duties which are grounded upon common equity, such as are duties of charity, justice, mercy, and condescendence unto human infirmity; of which sort is this moderation here spoken of; "Let your moderation be known to all men."

5. God is still present by his providence for the help of those that fear him, Psal. cxlv. 18, and is hastening unto his second coming, when he shall judge the world in righteousness, Rev. xxii. 20. "The Lord is at hand."

6. The consideration and faith of God's nearness, as said is, may encourage Christians much to the exercise of moderation in all their affairs, as knowing whatever present prejudice they may sustain by their Christian condescendency in remitting somewhat of their own right, rather than to hurt or scandalise others, it will be abundantly made up by the providence of God working for them in the mean time, and his complete righting of all wrongs in the day of his second coming, Mark x. 29, 30; for this is the argument whereby he presseth moderation; "The Lord is at hand."

VER. 6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Here is a further exhortation to beware of anxious, heart-cutting, diffident care about things worldly, and the success of what we do undertake in our lawful callings; for curing whereof he prescribeth this remedy, that in the conscientious use of their callings, they would have recourse unto God by prayer; wherein, by supplicating for good things, by deprecating deserved wrath, and thankful acknowledgment of mercies already received, they might pour out their hearts in God's bosom, leaving the disposal of all their affairs upon him.

DOCTRINES.

1. However there be a lawful care about things worldly, not prohibited, but frequently commanded, Rom. xii. 11; yet there is a care not lawful, to wit, when a man exceedeth in care, and so as to care for nothing but the world, Psal. xlix. 11, and so as to keep himself upon a continual rack, as fearing want of success in what he doth, Psal. xxxvii. 5, and so as to join issue with any thing, though never so sinful, for preserving or bringing about the thing cared for, 1 Tim. vi. 9. This excessive care is sinful, and here forbidden: "Be careful in nothing."

2. As this excessive care doth hinder the exercise of moderation, by driving men to the utmost of rigour in all their dealings with others, as fearing, lest by the smallest condescendency, they undo themselves; so nothing contributeth more to make a man merciful, gentle, and condescending to the necessity and good of others, though even to his own seeming prejudice, than to keep his heart above this anxious, vexing, diffident, and heart-cutting care: hence unto the former exhortation of making their "moderation known to all men," he subjoineth this as a help, "be careful in nothing."

3. The best remedy against this excessive diffident care, is, not to run upon the other extreme of casting by all lawful care and diligence, Matt. iv. 7; but that in the conscientious use of our lawful employments we make our address unto God by prayer, deprecating deserved wrath, asking for desired success, blessing him for favours already received, and so to leave the burden of all our care upon him: this is it which the apostle prescribeth, "but in every thing by supplication and prayer," &c.

4. All our prayers should be so composed as that they may be known to God, that is, approved of him; and so proceeding from the sense of our want, 1 Kings viii. 38, put up in the name of Christ, John xvi. 23, and for things according to his will, 1 John v. 14; "Let your requests be made known unto God."

5. There are several sorts of prayers set forth here, by three distinct expressions, for the word "requests" is general to all the kinds. First, there is "prayer," whereby we seek those things which we want from God, acknowledging how unworthy we are of them. Secondly, there is "supplication," whereby we deprecate evils and judgments, whether felt or feared, acknowledging our sins, whereby we have deserved them. Thirdly, there is "thanksgiving," whereby we bless God for favours already bestowed. "By prayer, and supplication, and thanksgiving."

6. Blessing of God for favours received is necessary to be joined with prayer and supplication; there being constant matter of thanksgiving under all conditions, ver. 11; and to suppress that fretting, quarrelling, and impatient humour which often venteth itself against God in our prayers and supplications, where thanksgiving to God for favours received is not joined with them, Psal. lxxvii. 7, compared with ver. 10, 11. Hence the apostle commandeth, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

VER. 7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

For enforcing the former exhortation, he subjoineth a promise, that upon their so doing, "the peace of God" (a mystery so deep that it transcendeth the reach of natural reason) should, as with a guard of armed soldiers, defend their understandings, will, and affections, against the assault of any temptation, which might otherwise drive them to discouragement, and vexing diffident cares, and fears of suffering from men, upon their exercise of moderation in all their actions.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is a calmness and tranquillity of spirit attainable by believers, flowing from their peace made with God in justification, and wrought in a believer by the Spirit of God, (hence it is called, "the peace of God,") which goeth beyond the reach of all created understanding to comprehend; it being a thing almost incredible, that those who are most under the lash of divine rods, should yet have God's peace; who of all others are most tossed with storms and tempests, should yet enjoy a sweet calm in their own mind; who are often destitute of all things, should yet be as little anxious as if they enjoyed all things. A Christian is made up thus of so many seeming contrarities, that no wonder the apostle doth speak here of this "peace of God" as "passing all understanding."

2. This peace of God cannot be preserved but in the due practice of commanded duties, especially in the exercise of prayer; for it is promised if they be diligent in prayer, ver. 16, "the peace of God shall guard their hearts."

3. Where this peace is entertained, it doth marvellously guard the whole soul, wit, will, and affections from being overcome by, or disquieted much with, the apprehension of losses or injuries, whether felt or feared. This peace with God, and with a man's own conscience in God, is of such excellent worth that, so long as it is enjoyed, no other loss is much valued; for it is promised as a guard against the fore-mentioned heart-cutting care: "The peace of God shall guard your hearts."

4. All that is in man, especially his soul, and every faculty of it, is as so many patent ports to receive most dangerous temptations; so that there must be a guard set to defend every one of them, otherways the temptation getteth most ready passage: thus much is imported while he saith, "the peace of God shall keep," or guard, "your hearts," that is, the will and affection, "and minds," that is, the understanding. It is a metaphor taken from military affairs, where guards of soldiers are placed at the ports of cities, or weaker parts of the walls, to stop the enemy's entry.

5. However preservation against the onsets of temptation be a promised fruit of diligence in the use of prescribed means, yet all the efficacy of those means cometh through Jesus Christ, and his virtue working with them, who therefore would be eyed above means: hence this safety from the temptation, though promised upon their

diligence in prayer; yet it is "through Jesus Christ."

VER. 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Because those Christians at Philippi lived among heathens, in whom there were some things worthy of imitation, as many other things were not, therefore the apostle exhorteth them to several things, relating chiefly to the adorning of religion, and making of it lovely unto those heathens; and particularly that they would diligently consider, and from consideration imitate, every thing among them, which was "true, honest, just, pure, and of good report;" providing only that those things "of good report," were not vices, but real virtues, and so truly worthy of praise.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christians, especially of those who live among haters of religion, and such as seek all occasions to speak evil of it, to set themselves to search, find out, and, as it were, to east their account by what means and carriage they may adorn religion most, and make it lovely unto others, and accordingly to carry themselves in all things: so, while he is exhorting those Philippians to adorn religion by their carriage, he enjoineeth them to "think on those things;" the word signifieth to search out a thing diligently, by comparing one with another, as accounters use to do.

2. Christians are not to be so scrupulous as to reject things true, and in themselves good, though professed and practised by men who are otherways extremely bad; so he exhorteth them to "think upon," and imitate, every thing which was "true and honest," even among the heathens.

3. It is the duty of Christians to discern truth from error, rejecting the latter and adhering to the former, Eph. iv. 14, 15; to speak nothing but truth in their ordinary communication, Eph. iv. 25; and to perform what they promise, Ps. xiv. 4: for they are to "think upon whatever things are true."

4. It is the duty of Christians so to walk, as by the whole strain of their carriage they may gain respect to their persons and profession from others; all their conversation savouring of nothing but gravity, as being far from scurrility, lightness and vanity in their apparel, words, deeds, and all their behaviour, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10: for those are things "honest," or grave, as it is in the original, which he exhorteth them to consider.

5. Christians ought to consider, and accordingly to perform, what things are "just," that is, whatever we are bound to do unto others, whether to God or man, Matt. xxii. 21; whether by the law of nature, 1 Tim. v. 8, or of nations, Ruth iii. 13; by reason of our place or station,

Neh. vi. 11; whether the things we owe be determined by paction, as such a sum of money, or so much grain, Col. iv. 1; or only to be determined according to the rules of prudence, equity, or charity, Col. iv. 1; whether it be fear, or honour, Rom. xiii. 7, good-will, Rom. xiii. 8, or somewhat further: so as none be defrauded of that which is his own: for those are the things "just" which he willetth them to "think upon."

6. Christians who would adorn the gospel, must study purity and chastity in all the parts of their conversation, being far from any thing in their words or actions which may savour of obscenity, or any bitter root of uncleanness within, Eph. iv. 29: for those are the "things pure," or chaste, which he exhorteth them to "think upon."

7. However Christians are not to venture on things sinful for humouring of those among whom they converse, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8, yet they are bound, in so far as with a good conscience they can, to commend their persons and profession, even to wicked men, by their lovely, affable, and condescending carriage, Titus iii. 2, 3; for those are the "things lovely" which he willetth them to mind.

8. Though Christians are not to hunt after the applause of men, Gal. i. 10, yet, lest the gospel be evil spoken of through them, and they in capacity to serve God in their stations by doing good unto others, they are to walk so as they may be deservedly spoken well of, eschewing every thing which tendeth to make their names stink and unsavoury unto others, 1 Pet. ii. 12: hence he commandeth them to "mind things that are of good report."

9. A Christian may not presently close with every thing which is well reported of, or may gain applause unto himself among those with whom he liveth, Luke xvi. 15; but except the thing in itself be the exercise of some virtue, and truly worthy of praise, he is to reject it and abhor it, although it be never so much cried up by others: for he exhorteth them to mind those "things which are of good report," but with this caution, "if there be any virtue or praise in them."

VER. 9. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

He presseth the former exhortation, First, from his own example: he had both preached and practised those things, as they themselves were witnesses. Secondly, from the fruit following: hereby they should enjoy more constant communion with God, and more of that inward peace whereof God is author.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of ministers who would prove faithful, to be much in pressing upon their hearers the substantial duties of religion; not insisting so much upon notional cases, or any other thing relating less to people's practice, Tit. iii. 9. Of the former sort were those, spoken of ver. 8,

which to inculcate by preaching was one great part of the apostle's task, as appeareth from the many expressions here used; "Those things which ye have both learned, received, and heard."

2. It is the duty of ministers not only to press duties by preaching, but to practise what they so press by a holy life, whereby people may see that in them which they hear from them, (see 1 Tim. iv. 12:) so did Paul; "Ye have both learned and seen in me."

3. A people are the more bound, and should be the more stirred up, to go about commanded duties, that they are under a minister whose doctrine is lively and his life exemplary: for Paul maketh his practice an argument to excite them to their duty; "Those things which ye have both learned, and seen in me."

4. A Christian keeping himself in the exercise of good works and practice of commanded duties, may expect much of God's gracious presence, and of that tranquillity and peace of mind whereof God is the author, under the strongest tossings of turbulent times: for he enforceth this exhortation, "those things do," from this promise, "the God of peace shall be with you."

VER. 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

In the second part of the chapter the apostle sheweth how much he rejoiced at, and was affected with their benevolence, sent unto him after so long delay of time; excusing also the delay, as imputing it to the calamity of the times, which deprived them of an opportunity, and not to want of good-will in them, which he did never question.

DOCTRINES.

1. As it is the lot of most eminent Christians sometimes to stand in need of help and supply from others; so it is their duty thankfully to acknowledge those whom God hath made helpful unto them in their strait: so doth the apostle here; "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly," &c.

2. A spiritual heart and wise observer of providence, will find matter of much joy in God, and of praise unto him, even in those things which to an ordinary eye would not seem to be of so much worth: so Paul looketh upon this gratuity as a matter of rejoicing in the Lord greatly, because he saw much more in it than the thing itself, to wit, a reviving of the root of grace in these fruits of charity, which before appeared as withered and gone; "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly," saith he, "that your care of me hath flourished."

3. Though there may be in those who are truly gracious, a sad cessation from the exercise of grace, sometimes through want of opportunity as here, and sometimes also through their falling into several sins, 2 Sam. xi. 4, yet the seed of God remaineth in them, there is life and sap at the root, which through God's blessing in due time will bud up and bring forth the flower fruit; "Now at last your care of me hath flour-

rished." The word is borrowed from trees, which seem in winter to be dead and withered, and in the spring revive again.

4. How long soever a mercy be delayed and postponed, a godly heart will see in it matter of thanksgiving both to God, and also to those from whom as instruments, the mercy is conveyed: so did Paul, "I rejoiced, that now at last your care of me hath flourished."

5. It were the wisdom of God's people to watch for the opportunity of doing good, and make use of it; seeing even those who would do good may ere long be deprived of opportunity to do it: "Ye were careful, but ye lacked opportunity."

6. The want of an opportunity, not through our default, doth excuse and justify the forbearance for a time, of a positive duty, if so good-will be present, (see 2 Cor. viii. 12.) from this Paul excuseth them; "Ye wanted opportunity," saith he.

7. It is the part of Christian charity to excuse, so far as prudence will permit, that which may seem to be the neglect of others, expounding things doubtful favourably, and imputing their omissions to the want, not of good-will, but of opportunity: so doth Paul; "Wherein ye were careful, but ye wanted opportunity."

VER. 11. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Lest they had mistaken the apostle, as if his so much joy for their gratuity had argued him to have been of a dejected spirit through reason of want, he clears himself, denying his joy to have proceeded from any thing of that kind, and that because he was gifted from God with full contentment under every condition, ver. 11; and so he reckoneth several particular conditions, under which he had learned to live contentedly at all times, and in all places: As first, under disgrace, and abundance of worldly applause. Secondly, store of meat and drink, and under scarcity and want. Thirdly, under his abounding generally in all things necessary for food, raiment, lawful pleasures and recreations, and a sparing measure of all those things, ver. 12. And lest, by what is said, he might be looked upon as a vain arrogant boaster, he pointeth at the fountain from whence he was furnished, to wit, the power and virtue of Jesus Christ enabling him, ver. 13.

DOCTRINES.

1. A seeker of God, especially a Christian minister, would be careful lest he do or say any thing whereby he may incur the suspicion of being too much desirous of things worldly, or of

being too much dejected and cast down through the want of them: there being nothing which maketh the gospel to be worse spoken of, than the sin of covetousness in the preachers, or professors of it: hence Paul doth so carefully clear his former words from savouring of any thing of that kind; "Not that I speak in respect of want," saith he.

2. The child of God is subject to change of conditions in things outward, being sometimes in credit, sometimes in disgrace; sometimes rich, sometimes poor; sometimes sick, sometimes in health; sometimes enjoying all things necessary for his sustentation and life; sometimes almost wholly deprived of them: so was it with Paul: "I know how to be abased, and how to abound," &c.

3. Whatever be the several changes, where-with the Lord doth exercise his own, they are to be contented under them, to wit, so as not to grudge and repine against God, Job ii. 9, 10; or to give way unto heartless dejection of spirit under adversity, Prov. xxiv. 10, though they may use lawful means for delivering themselves from it, 1 Sam. xxx. 9; and so as not to be puffed up by prosperity, Job xxxi. 25, nor forget the Lord, Prov. xxx. 9, and despise others who want, Job xxxi. 13. Thus Paul "learned in every state therewith to be content; he knew how to abound," &c.

4. This great lesson of contentment under every estate, is a thing whereof all by nature are ignorant, none have skill in it except they learn it: Paul did learn it, "I have learned."

5. The knowledge of this lesson is attained, not so much by reading books, and infixing in our memories directions to that purpose, as by frequent change of condition, and the Lord's blessing of our changes for begetting in us experimental knowledge, how to carry ourselves in each condition: thus Paul did learn this lesson, "I have learned and am instructed," the latter word signifieth, to be initiated in holy things, or religiously taught; so there is a piece of divine skill necessary for teaching folk this lesson.

6. The temptations which attend a prosperous condition are so many, such as pride, 1 Tim. vi. 17, disdain of others, James ii. 6, and security, Luke xii. 19; the duties which are required in it are so many, such as thankfulness to God, 1 Chron. xxiv. 10, beneficence to all men, 1 Tim. vi. 18, humility and sobriety of spirit in the managing of it, Jer. ix. 23, and laying our account to meet with changes, Job iii. 25, and the many distractions which do accompany it, and tend to the hindering of those duties, are so subtle and insinuating, 1 Tim. vi. 9; that there is no less need of divine art for carrying of ourselves aright under prosperity, than there is for such a Christian carriage under adversity: so Paul must be "instructed, how to be full, and how to abound," as well as how to be "hungry, and how to suffer want."

7. Man's natural faculties are renewed, but not destroyed by grace, or laid asleep, as if Christ himself did all things, and we nothing: for Paul saith here, that "he did;" the action did flow from an inward principle of a renewed will and understanding, "I am able to do."

8. The power by which renewed souls do

work, is wholly Christ's; not only the habits of grace are from him, but also the actuating of those habits doth flow from his special influence: "Through him that strengtheneth me."

9. There is a kind of omnipotency in a believer, being supported by Christ's strengthening power; so that there is nothing within the compass of his Christian calling, and for which there is a covenant-promise for through-bearing, there is no such thing impossible for him to do; "I am able to do all things."

10. This note of universality, "all," whether applied to persons or things, is not to be taken everywhere in its larger sense, but to be restricted to the clear meaning of the place where it is, and the exigency of other Scriptures: so Paul saith, "I am able to do all things," which cannot be extended to all and every thing without limitation, there being many things simply impossible to be done by any creature, but must be restricted to all those things which consist in the exercise of Christian moderation under all dispensations, or at most to all things within the compass of his Christian calling, and for which there is a covenant-promise for through-bearing: see 1 Cor. vi. 12, and chap. ix. 22, by which rule that passage, 1 Tim. ii. 6, is to be expounded.

VER. 14. Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction.

Having guarded upon the one hand against their suspecting of him to have been too much dejected through want, he guardeth against another mistake, as if their gratuity had been little acceptable unto him; by showing they had done well in doing what they had done, and sharing with him in his sufferings for Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is nothing which men can do, wherein they are not liable to mistakes: for even while they are clearing themselves of one mistake, they are in hazard thereby to run under another, as Paul was here.

2. The danger of being mistaken should hinder no man from going on in his duty; he is to do what he can to take off mistakes, and in the mean time be going on in what is right: so Paul having cleared himself, proceedeth in his duty, commending those Philippians for their charity; and thereby wipeth off another mistake, which might have risen upon his guarding against the former; "Nevertheless, ye have done well."

3. Though the children of God be supported with courage from himself, to be content with, and to undergo their present lot; yet this must not make others neglect to help them in their strait, because in so doing they do but what is their duty: neither should it make themselves neglect the offer of supply from others, or vilipend it when it is received; this were to tempt God, by neglecting means of help, because of God's goodness in supporting under want of means, when they could not be had. Thus, though Paul was enabled through Christ to be content with his hard lot, yet the Philippians give him help, and are therein approved and

highly commended by him; "Nevertheless," saith he, "ye have done well."

4. It is the duty of all to prove comfortable unto those who are suffering for truth, by supplying of their necessities according to their power: they did "well in communicating with Paul's affliction."

5. They who make conscience of this duty, do hereby share in the afflictions of those who suffer for truth, as if they were suffering the same things, and for the same cause with them: so the apostle affirms, because of their gratuity, "they had communicated with his afflictions."

VER. 15. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

16. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

The apostle sheweth himself mindful, not only of the present favour, but also of their by-past liberality towards him, ever since he began to preach the gospel among them; and this not only when he was labouring among themselves, but also when he was at Thessalonica; and withal doth guard against their suspecting of him, as too greedy in receiving so frequently from them, by showing he had received nothing as a reward for his work from any other church in those parts; for the truth whereof, he appealeth to their own knowledge.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is a rule of equity to be kept betwixt pastor and people, that, as he bestoweth upon them spiritual things by preaching of the gospel, so they should furnish him with things carnal, by giving an honourable maintenance, 1 Cor. ix. 11; and this a faithful minister may expect and crave, not as a mere gratuity, but as due debt, 1 Tim. v. 17; this is imported in the phrase here used by Paul, when speaking of maintenance which was bestowed on him by those he laboured amongst in the work of the gospel, he useth the expression of "giving and receiving," which is used by merchants, who in their books of accounts, do mark what they give out, and what they receive in, as the due price of their ware.

2. Though maintenance be most due for ministers, yet such is the peevishness and greed of many, that hardly can they be driven to quit any thing for upholding of the gospel, though even an apostle Paul were preaching among them: this Paul did find, "no church did communicate with me, as concerning giving." Though it may be also, the apostle did forbear to receive any thing from others, were they never so willing, for the reasons mentioned, 1 Cor. ix. 15, 16, 18, 19; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.

3. A faithful servant of Jesus Christ, who is taken up with a desire after the gaining of souls, will digest many unkindnesses of that sort, passing them over as he best may, especially so long as the Lord provideth for him otherways, as he usually doth, making some to show the more of

kindness, that others show but little: so doth Paul meekly pass over his not receiving from those other churches, mentioning with thankfulness the help which he received from Philippi: "No church communicated with me, but ye only."

4. This speaketh much to the commendation of a people, when the general neglect of duty by others, doth not only not make them neglect their duty, but also exciteth them to be more forward in it: for from this are the Philippians commended; "no church did communicate with me, but ye only;" and "ye sent once and again;" they did not look so much unto that which others did, as what they themselves were bound to do.

5. As the Lord may suffer his choicest servants to be driven to worldly straits through want of things necessary; so, usually he makes providence to tryst [meet] with their necessity, and answereth it by those who are least obliged, when others who are more bound, do take no notice of it, or they cannot conveniently make use of their help: so, even in "Thessalonica, ye sent once and again to my necessity;" when the Thessalonians, to whom he was preaching, neglected him; or, he could not receive from them, the Philippians sent him supply.

VER. 17. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

He doth yet guard against their suspecting him of greed, showing that his praising of their liberality, and charging of others with ingratitude, was not, that thereby he might incite them to give him more, but that they might be encouraged to grow more and more, as in all grace, so in this of liberality, whether towards him or others: the advantage thereof should accree to themselves, more than to any other.

DOCTRINES.

1. One action in itself good and lawful, may be reckoned unto the worker, either as sin or duty, according to the end which he proposeth to himself in it: so Paul's commending of their liberality was in itself good, but if his end proposed had been only, or mainly, that thereby he might excite them to give him more, his action had been base and sinful; and therefore he purgeth himself of it, "not that I desire a gift:" but his intent being mainly to promote their salvation by stirring them up to their duty, his action is commendable; and therefore he owneth this as the thing intended by him, "but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

2. As ministers ought in prudence to speak to the just commendation of any good, which they observe in people, ver. 14; so, a pious heart will not be thereby puffed up, or rendered secure, as if he had done enough; but rather excited to make further progress: "I desire fruit that may abound."

3. The more a man doth abound in good works, and especially in the works of charity towards such as are in misery, the greater shall be his reward in heaven, though not of merit, yet of grace, Rom. vi. 23; for their fruit of charity "should abound to their account."

It is a metaphor taken also from the books of merchants: our good deeds are marked as in a compt-book by God, and he will give out accordingly.

VER. 18. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

That he may remove all suspicions of that kind, and praise their liberality yet further, he sheweth, that their gratuity carried by Epaphroditus, was received of him, and did abundantly satisfy, as being sufficient, yea, more than sufficient, for the present strait; and that hereby they had done as acceptable service unto God, as those who under the law did offer up a sacrifice perfumed with sweetest incense.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though a man be never so trustworthy in himself, and never so much trusted by those who do employ him, yet he ought in wisdom to guard against any sinister suspicion which may be taken up against his honesty and faithfulness: so Epaphroditus, though their minister, and doubtless in great reputation among them, as a man who would have been loth to convert any of their public charity to his own private use; yet returneth not until Paul give it under his hand, that he had received the whole sum from him. "I have all," or, "I have received all," as it is in the original: he knew not but times and people's esteem of him might change, and he might be brought to an account, or at least some might vent their own suspicious of him privately, to undermine him.

2. Where there is frugality to manage, and the grace of contentation with what the Lord is pleased to bestow, a little portion of things worldly will be thought sufficient: so, though a covetous man, and prodigal spendthrift, doth never think he hath enough, yet Paul doth think it; "I abound, and am full, having received the things which ye sent."

3. However there are no expiatory sacrifices for sin to be offered up by Christians, Christ having offered up himself once for all, Heb. ix. 28, and though the outward rite of sacrificing in any kind be now abolished, all those rudiments ceasing with the nonage of the church which was under the Old Testament, Acts xv. 10; yet the substance of the eucharistic sacrifice used among the Jews, or the thing which was pointed out by that sacrifice, doth yet remain as a moral duty never to be laid aside, to wit, an evidencing of our thankfulness to God for favours received, which is done in part, by giving a part of what he hath bestowed for the help of others who are in a strait; for Paul in this sense calleth their charity "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice."

4. Seeing our charity and beneficence unto those who are in straits is a part of our Christian sacrifice; then, first, it must be willingly bestowed, and not through constraint, 2 Cor. ix. 7.

Secondly, it must be offered unto God in obedience to a command, and to evidence our thankfulness unto him, and not to the creature, not to the idol of our credit and estimation, or for other selfish ends, Matt. vi. 2. Thirdly, it must be offered on the right altar, to wit, Christ, (see Heb. xiii. 10,) that through his worth the offering may be accepted by God; for all those were requisite unto orderly and acceptable sacrificing: see Lev. xxii. 19, Exod. xx. 24, and xxii. 20.

5. Though there be no such measure of obedience attainable here, with which the Lord will be so well pleased, as to judge the performer to be perfect, or adjudge him to eternal life for the worth that is in it, Rom. iii. 20, Christ's obedience and sacrifice only being acceptable, and thus well-pleasing unto him, Rom. v. 19; yet he may be so pleased with his obedience, as to judge him sincere in what he doth, and to look on his performance as his own gracious work in him; and that is, when the thing performed is in itself good, Psal. lxxxix. 30—32, done by a man in Christ, John xv. 4, by strength drawn from Christ, John xv. 5, and for the right end, God's glory, and not worldly applause, Matt. vi. 5. In this respect he calleth their beneficence, "An odour of a sweet smell, acceptable and well-pleasing unto God."

VER. 19. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

For their further encouragement, he promiseth unto them from Scripture grounds (see Psal. xli. 1,) that God should recompense them for what they had given, and that abundantly, even in this life according to their necessity, not for any worth or dignity in their work, but of his own free grace through Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. Scripture promises made of old, are still in force, and in all after-times applicable unto any endued with those qualifications which they had unto whom those promises were first made: so Paul alleth that promise (Psal. xli.) made unto those who were charitable in David's time, unto those Philippians; "But my God shall supply all your need."

2. That general promises may be the more safely and with the greater comfort applied to our own, or the particular case of others, we would search into such grounds as may be most promising for faith to rest upon in expectation of the thing promised: so the apostle to help their faith to close with this promise, layeth down two grounds: first, God's sufficiency in these words, "according to his riches;" he hath whereupon to do it. Secondly, his engagement upon his credit and honour in those words, "my God," as if he had said, "He is the God whose ambassador I am," and so cannot in honour but recompense you for what ye have given to me in my strait.

3. Those who enjoy most of the world cannot promise unto themselves, but they may be driven

to straits: for he supposeth even they might be redacted to straits, while he saith, "my God shall supply all your need."

4. The more beneficial any have been unto the poor servants of Christ in the time of their abundance, they may expect the more that God will be forthcoming unto them by his providence in the day of want: "my God shall supply all your need."

5. The Lord, in dealing with his people, doth not look so much at their worth and deserving, as what is fitting for his own glory, and most befitting for such a glorious God to do: "so he shall supply your need in glory," that is, liberality, as the magnificence of such a glorious King doth call for.

6. Whatever recompense the Lord is pleased to give unto the good works, or alms-deeds of his children, whether here or hereafter, it proceedeth not from the merit or dignity of the work, but from the merits of Jesus Christ, in whom they are as members in the head, Christ hath purchased all; and good works are only the rule according to which his purchase is distributed: "so he shall supply all your need by," or, "in Jesus Christ."

VER. 20. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The apostle in the third part of the chapter, concluding the epistle, first, in contemplation of all the former mercies, ascribeth lasting praise and glory to God as God, and as the Father of believers, through virtue of that gracious covenant made between him and them in Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though we can wish no real worth and excellency to be superadded unto that which God hath: for he wanteth nothing, Neh. ix. 5. Yet it is the duty of Christians to be much in wishing, that those excellencies which are in God, may be more and more shining forth, Isa. lxiv. 2, and that the hearts of men and angels may highly esteem of him because of them, Psal. cvii. 8; for this is the glory which the apostle wisheth unto God, and by his practice teacheth others to do the like: "Now unto God be glory."

2. That Christians may be much and real in this wish, they would seriously consider that worth, excellency, and goodness of God manifested to themselves in his works, particularly in his works of creation and general providence, in relation to which he is here called God; but most especially in the works of redemption and Salvation purchased for, and actually bestowed upon lost sinners: in relation to which he is here called "Our Father;" that so our own hearts being once affected and filled, even to overflowing, we may with greater fervency and sincerity break out with this wish, that the same excellency, and more of it may be manifested unto, and constantly acknowledged both by ourselves and others: so the apostle having considered his many favours spoken of through the whole epistle, and looking on him as God and our Father, breaketh out in this wish, "Now unto God and our Father be glory."

3. The fervent desire of real saints to have the excellency, worth and goodness of God manifested, and accordingly acknowledged, are in a manner boundless as being circumscribed by no time or place: there is no less than boundless everlasting glory comprehended in their wish; "glory for ever and ever:" whereby is usually expressed eternity and endless duration, see *Psa. x. 16, Rev. xxii. 5.*

VER. 21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.

The brethren which are with me greet you.

22. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.

Secondly, in the conclusion, there are mutual salutations and commendations: some were to be saluted by them in his name, others who were with him did salute, or remember themselves unto them, of whom he reckoneth three ranks. First, those who were in church office, called brethren, ver. 21. Secondly, the private Christians or church-members, which were at Rome. And thirdly, more especially he designeth Cesar's household, to wit, some of his servants and courtiers, who were converts.

DOCTRINES.

1. External duties of civility tending of their own nature to entertain and increase love among men, are not to be neglected by Christians, of which sort are civil salutations: though civility and good manners be not religion; yet religion destroyeth them not, but enjoineth them: so Paul and those primitive Christians did mutually salute each other; "Salute every saint."

2. Whatever a man be in his inward condition before God, or in his outward condition worldly, whether rich or poor, noble or ignoble; yet, so long as he standeth a church-member, a minister should put that respect upon him, and do those duties to him which are due unto one in such a relation; for he enjoineth them, in his name, "to salute every saint," that is, all the church-members, who are saints all of them by external, or federal sanctity, or holiness: according to which, in regard of the covenant made betwixt God and the visible church, every one professing subjection unto that covenant are separated from other people, and in a particular manner dedicated unto God's service, *Exod. xxxi. 13.* Now that saints are taken in this latitude here, is very probable: for if the command had been to salute only those who are saints by inherent holiness, how could it have been obeyed? for real saving grace cannot be known infallibly by another, and so inevitably they should have saluted many hypocrites in place of saints, passing by others who were saints indeed. It may indeed bear thus much, that if any had more real evidence of grace than others, the apostle would have himself more specially remembered unto such; but this is not all, for he will have them saluting every saint, and so those who were well known unto them to be such: neither doth the words following, "in Christ Jesus," militate against this sense; for even those, who are externally and federally saints, are in Christ by an external

and visible union, consisting in the serious profession of those truths which relate to him; the effect of which union is, the communication of common gifts of the Spirit to every one according to their measure: see *John xv. 2*, "Every branch in me which heareth no fruit," which supposeth some to be in Christ in the way mentioned, who yet are fruitless branches, and so unregenerate.

3. Christian charity will so far cover the infirmities and failings of others; as not to disown them as brethren, nor yet neglect those Christian duties which we owe unto them, or are obliged to do for them as brethren; for although (*chap. ii. ver. 20, 21*) he complains of all who were with him, except *Timotheus* only, that "no man was like-minded," and all "did seek their own things;" yet nevertheless, he doth in their name salute the *Philippians*, calling them brethren; "the brethren which are with me greet you."

4. So powerful is the gospel, being accompanied with God's blessing, *Rom. i. 16*, that it will set upon and enter the houses of greatest persecutors, and carry some of their chiefest minions captive from their very elbow: some even of bloody Nero's house are converted by the gospel; "those of Cesar's household."

5. Such is the courage and valour of spirit with which the Lord doth endue sincere professors of the gospel, that they will dare to hold up a banner for truth, even under the nose and within the gates of most bloodthirsty raging persecutors; for some of Nero's house upon all hazard perform those duties which their Christian calling tied them unto: "Chiefly they that are of Cesar's household" do greet you.

VER. 23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Thirdly, he concludeth with his usual farewell-wish, to which he affixeth his "Amen."

DOCTRINES.

1. God's grace is the sum of all which a man needeth to wish either for himself or others; for his grace is, first, God's favour, as the fountain of all which is good, *Eph. ii. 8, 9.* And, secondly, the streams of grace inherent, and increase in it, flowing from that fountain, *2 Pet. iii. 18.* And what want is there where those are? So Paul summeth up all his desires in this one, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

2. God's grace and favour, which reconciled souls do enjoy, together with the whole bulk of graces inherent, which flow from it, are all purchased unto us by Christ's merit, and applied by his intercession; and therefore is justly called "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. Our prayers and wishes unto God should proceed from such deliberation of mind, *Matt. xx. 22*, such earnestness of heart and affection, *James v. 16*, and such confidence of an answer according to the tenor of the promise, *James i. 6*, that we may understandingly and sincerely affix our Amen unto them; so doth the apostle, "Grace be with you all. Amen."

THE
EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

EXPOSITION

OF THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.



EPAPHRAS having founded a church at Colosse, (chap. i. 7,) a city of Phrygia in the lesser Asia, near to Laodicea and Hierapolis, chap. iv. ver. 13. and perceiving the truth of the gospel preached by him, to be impugned; partly by some converted from Judaism, who urged the ceremonies of the law, as necessary to salvation, chap. ii. ver. 8, partly, by some converted from Gentilism, who, from principles of abused philosophy, did urge the worshipping of angels and other superstitious rites, grounded only upon human tradition, chap. ii. ver. 8—13; he informeth Paul, now prisoner at Rome, (chap. iv. ver. 3,) of the case of this church: whereupon Paul writeth this epistle unto them. His scope wherein, is, (after prefacing to ver. 12, chap. i.) to confirm that doctrine which was preached unto them by Epaphras, to the end of chap. i.; and to guard them against all the fore-named errors, contrary to that doctrine, chap. ii., and to incite them to the study and practice of holiness, both in the general and special duties of Christianity, chap. iii. and to ver. 7, of chap. iv. After which he insisteth upon some particular affairs, such as recommendations, salutations, and some directions, to the end of chap. iv.

CHAPTER I.

IN the first part of this chapter (after the inscription, ver. 1, 2) he insinuateth himself upon their affections, and maketh way for his main purpose: first, by showing he did give thanks to God for them, ver. 3, being moved thereto by the report of their spiritual graces, ver. 4, 5. Secondly, by commending them for their fruitfulness, ver. 6, and their pastor Epaphras unto

them, ver. 7, 8. Thirdly, by showing he prayed also to God for them: first, for increase of knowledge, ver. 9; secondly, for growth in holiness, ver. 10; and thirdly, for courage under sufferings, ver. 11.

In the second part he giveth a brief sum of saving doctrine; wherein he declareth how God doth fit the elect for heaven, ver. 12, by calling them effectually, ver. 13, and pardoning their sin, ver. 14. Next, he describeth Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the elect, from his internal relation to God, as being his image, ver. 15; his external relation unto all things created, as being before them, ver. 15, their Creator, last end, ver. 16, and their upholder, ver. 17; and from his relation to the church as being her head, &c., ver. 18; and from his furniture to the office of mediator, ver. 19, especially to reconcile man with God, ver. 20; which general doctrine of reconciliation, he applieth unto the Colossians, ver. 21, 22.

In the third part he exhorteth them to continue in this doctrine, confirming the same, first, from the authority of his office, ver. 23, which, together with the doctrine preached by him, was confirmed by his sufferings, ver. 24, and from his call to the office, ver. 25; secondly, from the worth of the doctrine in itself, ver. 26, 27; and thirdly, because it was the same doctrine which he himself preached, ver. 28, with great pains, and much divine assistance, ver. 29.

VER. 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In these two verses is the inscription of the epistle, containing, first, a description of those who sent it, from their names and adjuncts, ver. 1. Secondly, of those to whom it was directed; from the place of their habitation, and three excellent epithets. Thirdly, the apostle's usual salutation, ver. 2.

From the persons who sent the epistle; learn,

1. How free and powerful must divine grace be, which of a persecuting Saul, Acts viii. 3, did make an "apostle Paul."

2. In the first beginning of the Christian church, there were a certain kind of office-bearers, named apostles, who were called immediately by God, John xx. 21, had infallible knowledge of the doctrine of the gospel, by immediate inspiration from the Spirit of God, John xvi. 13, were not tied unto any certain charge, further than rules of prudence did direct, Matt. xxviii. 19, were gifted with power to work miracles for confirmation of their doctrine, Mark iii. 15, the glad tidings of grace being then but new, John i. 17; and did occasionally exercise the duties of all the office-bearers of the church, Acts iv. 35, of which apostles Paul was one, "Paul, an apostle."

3. Jesus Christ, the mediator, is intrusted with the work of sending out ministers to his church; for he is the church's head, Eph. v. 23, unto whom it belongeth to provide all things necessary for the body; hence "Paul is the apostle of Jesus Christ," as being sent by him.

4. The Father's will and Christ's, do fully agree in that which tendeth to the church's good, as here, in sending forth an apostle, "Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God."

5. None ought to intrude himself upon any office, much less upon an office in the church, without an orderly call: "Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God."

6. It concerneth a minister to be so clear in the matter of his call, that he may be able to avow it unto others, especially when his calling is questioned, Amos vii. 14, &c., when he hath to do with those that know him not, as here, chap. ii. ver. 1, and when he meeteth with contempt and other discouragements in the discharge of his calling, Jer. xvii. 15, 16. So Paul upon some or all of these occasions, avoweth his calling: "An apostle of Jesus Christ."

7. The most gracious, able, and eminent Christians should be, and ordinarily are, so disposed as not to despise the less eminent and weaker; but giving them all due respect, are to take their assistance in any thing wherein they may be useful: especially seeing God hath not given all things unto every one, and the meanest have somewhat whereby they may prove steadable to the best, 1 Cor. xii. 21, 22. So Paul joineth Timothy with himself in the inscription, though Timothy was not an apostle, or penman of Scripture; because he being well known unto those Colossians, his assent might add the more weight unto that which is written, and that hereby Timotheus might be yet more commended unto them, as being so highly honoured by such an eminent apostle; for which cause also Paul giveth him the name of "brother," they being fellow-labourers in the gospel: "Timotheus, our brother."

From the description of those unto whom the epistle is directed, learn, 1. Though all the members of the visible church be externally saints, and federally holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14, yet there are some, who, besides that relative holiness, are really saints, inherently holy, and endued with gracious virtues and qualifications, and such God

respecteth most; for whose sake mainly he sendeth his word unto others, 2 Kings iii. 14; for Paul writeth to the saints in this latter sense mainly, though not excluding the former.

2. Whoever are saints, are also faithful and believers; whoever are believers, are also saints; and so far and in the same sense that a man is a saint, he is a believer also: they who are externally saints, and federally holy, do profess at least the doctrine of faith, either personally or parentally: and they who are inherently holy; are also inherently and savingly believers, as not only professing the doctrine, but also assenting to the truth of it, and embracing it in their hearts; and again all such believers are really changed from sin to holiness; so these two are here conjoined, as being of equal extent: "To the saints, and faithful."

3. All saints and believers are also brethren, because of their professing the same religion, and worshipping the same God, Deut. xvii. 20; because of their brotherly love and affection, 2 Thess. iv. 9; because they have one Father, God, and one elder brother, Jesus Christ, John i. 12; and because they are all ingrafted in one mystical body, and quickened by one and the same Spirit, Eph. iv. 4; as natural brethren have their birth from the self-same parents; so the "saints and faithful" are also "brethren."

4. There is no sanctity, faith, or fraternity of any moment unto salvation, except it be founded upon Christ, flowing from him, and relating to him; whatever is of those among heathens, and men otherwise destitute of Christ, is only counterfeited, not real; civilising, not saving, Matt. v. 46; so they are "saints, faithful, brethren in Christ."

5. After Christ's incarnation and death, free grace hath enlarged itself much beyond its ancient bounds; for whereas before the bounds of the people were according to the number of the children of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 8, there is now a church of "saints and faithful brethren at Colosse."

From the salutation, learn, 1. God's favour and free grace is to be sought after in the first place, whether for ourselves or others, and all other things which tend to our happiness here or hereafter, as streams flowing from that fountain; thus Paul wisheth for "grace" first, and "peace" next.

2. Where God's grace and favour is obtained, all other things prosperous will undoubtedly follow, in so far as God seeth them to conduce for our good, Matt. vii. 11, as appeareth from the connexion between the good things wished for by the apostle; "Grace be unto you, and peace."

3. God's grace and favour, together with all good things flowing from it, is the peculiar allowance of those who lay claim to God as theirs, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace: for Paul, in seeking grace and peace, oweth God as Father; "From God our Father."

4. As God hath fulness of grace, and of all things necessary to be conveyed unto lost sinners, so there is no access unto him to receive of that fulness from him, but through Jesus Christ, who is mediator betwixt God and man, 1 Tim.

ii. 5; for he wisheth grace from God the Father, "through Jesus Christ."

VER. 3. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

That the apostle may excite those Colossians to constancy and progress in faith and piety, and in order thereto procure their attention and benevolence, he sheweth that he and Timothy did make conscience of giving thanks to God on their behalf; and this they did always when they prayed for them.

DOCTRINES.

1. So apt are people to reject truth, when there is any prejudice against the preacher, 1 Kings xxii. 8, that whosoever would preach to any good purpose, must labour so to bear in upon people's affections, that they may have ground to conceive of him as of one that loveth them; this the apostle doth here through the whole preface unto the twelfth verse.

2. As it is our duty in relation to God, Matt. ix. 8, so it speaketh much our hearty affection unto others, when the graces of God, parts, and abilities that are in them, do not produce carnal emulation or envy, Numb. xi. 29, nor flattering commendations of the men themselves, Job xxxii. 21, but furnisheth us with matter of thanksgiving unto God: thus Paul doth evidence his affection to those Colossians; "We give thanks to God."

3. God is the Father of Jesus Christ, not only as God, by an eternal generation and communion of his whole essence unto him in a way unspeakable, Psal. ii. 7, but even also as man, through virtue of the personal union of the two natures in Christ, and in a special way, which doth far excel all other ways, whereby he is a father to other men and angels, Luke i. 32: thus "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," are one; for the particle "and" is exegetic of the same thing, and not copulative of things different.

4. In all our performances we should eye God with a respect had to Jesus Christ, seeing the Father is well pleased only in him, both with our persons and duties, Matt. iii. 17; for in giving thanks he eyeth God with a relation to Christ; "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

5. Then is the fittest time to give thanks to God for favours bestowed, when our hearts are somewhat elevated to God, and our affections somewhat warmed in the duty of prayer; and the duties of prayer and praise do mutually contribute for the help one of another: thus the apostle "gave thanks, always praying for them," that is, always when he prayed for them; for so are the words to be ordered, and not "praying always," as if he had been constantly praying for them.

VER. 4. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints;

He declareth the reasons of his thanksgiving, to wit, those spiritual graces which were eminent in them; of which he instanteth two, and doth illustrate them from their principal object, "faith in Christ," and "love to all the saints."

DOCTRINES.

1. Where there is saving grace in any, there is sufficient ground of rejoicing in God for them, whatever be their case otherwise; and where this is not, there is little besides but matter of grief; all other things, without this, being but a curse and snare unto them, Tit. i. 15; so Paul giveth thanks, "having heard of their faith and love."

2. Of those spiritual favours, the enjoyment whereof is a ground of thanksgiving, faith is among the first, for thereby we are united unto, and have communion with Christ, Eph. iii. 17, hereby we are justified, Rom. v. 1, and our hearts purified, Acts xv. 9, and all our performances accepted, Heb. xi. 4; so he thanketh God for their "faith," in the first place.

3. Though there be no scripture truth, unto which, being once made known, the grace of faith giveth not a firm assent, Acts xxiv. 14, yet Jesus Christ, and those truths which speak of him, are the principal object of saving and justifying faith; and therefore it is called, "faith in Jesus Christ."

4. There is a necessary connexion betwixt the graces of faith and love, the former without the latter being dead, James ii. 17, and the latter without the former being not real, but in appearance only, or at the best but a moral virtue, and no saving grace, Matt. v. 20; so they are here conjoined, "of your faith in Jesus Christ, and your love."

5. Though Christians are bound to love all men, even their enemies, Matt. v. 44, yet seeing God is to be loved chiefly, and all others but in subordination to him, Matt. xxii. 38, 39, it followeth that those are to have most of our love, who resemble God most; therefore the love of those Colossians was chiefly towards "the saints."

6. We are to lay out our love upon saints, as they are saints, for the reality or appearance of good in them, and not for other by-respects only, or mainly, as of kindred, friendship, or favours bestowed by them, Matt. v. 46, neither are we to withdraw our affection from any such, because of their infirmities, their differing from us in opinion, or personal injuries received from them, 2 Cor. xii. 15; for so their love was "to all the saints," none being excepted.

VER. 5. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

He sheweth the cause moving them to persevere in those graces, to wit, the hoped-for reward of glory preserved for them in heaven, and made known unto them; yea, and the hope whereof was wrought in them, Rom. x. 17, by the "word of truth," that is, the gospel.

DOCTRINES.

1. The believer's portion is not given him in hand, he hath it only in hope; for it is called "their hope," a thing only hoped for.

2. The believer's portion is laid up for him, and safely kept for his use, and that in a most sure place, to wit, in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves do break through and steal; which is "laid up," to wit, safely, as a parent would hide a treasure for the use of his child; so doth the word signify: "Which is laid up for you in heaven."

3. As there is little to be expected and hoped for on earth by a man who will live godly, except temptations and crosses, 2 Tim. iii. 12, so the eyeing of this rich reward of glory laid up in heaven, is a strong encouragement to persevere in faith, love, and other graces; and it is lawful for Christians to have an eye to this reward, as a motive to duty; providing, first, it be not looked at as a thing to be merited by their obedience, Rom. vi. 23; nor secondly, as the only or chief motive, 2 Cor. v. 14: thus they were encouraged, not from any thing earthly, but from "the hope which was laid up for them in heaven."

4. That ever heaven and glory should be enjoyed by any of lost mankind, was a thing that nature's light could never have dreamed of, except God himself had made it known by his word; thus he mentioneth the hearing of this rich reward by the word preached, as the mean whereby it was made known unto them; "Whereof ye heard in the word."

5. It is the word preached which the Lord doth ordinarily bless, as his instrument for begetting saving faith, and the hope of glory in us; the word not only propounding and making known to the understanding the object of those graces which was before hid, but the Lord also, at, or after the hearing of this word, infusing them into the heart, Acts xvi. 14. Thus he mentioneth the hearing of it, as the mean also, whereby the saving hope of this reward was wrought in them; "Whereof ye heard before in the word."

6. Though the whole word of God be true, Psa. xix. 9, as being the word of him who cannot lie, Tit. i. 2, yet the word of the gospel is eminently the word of truth, as having Christ for its main subject, who is the way, the truth, and life, John xiv. 6, and being confirmed by the testator's blood, John xviii. 37; for, saith he, "in the word of truth," that is, "of the gospel."

7. It is this word of the gospel, the preaching whereof doth make known to us and worketh in us that blessed hope; the word of the law, as distinct from the gospel, doth only damn, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7; but the word of grace, revealed in the gospel, bringeth salvation, Tit. ii. 11; so the apostle, speaking of that glorious reward, he addeth, "whereof ye have heard in the word of truth," that is, "of the gospel."

VER. 6. Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it

doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

Having mentioned the gospel, he commendeth it, and the Colossians jointly with it. First, the gospel preached to them by Epaphras, was the same which was preached by the apostles through the world. Secondly, it had brought forth fruits of a holy life in those who heard it, especially among them. Thirdly, those fruits were timeous and constant, every one of which particulars may be looked upon as an additional cause of his thanksgiving to God for them.

DOCTRINES.

1. God bringeth the gospel unto a people before they send for it; he is found of them who sought him not, Isa. lxxv. 1; "Which is come unto you," saith he.

2. This is matter of praise to God, when the light of the gospel breaketh up, where before it was not, and is accompanied with early and constant fruits of humility, faith, love, and other graces, among those to whom it is preached; for those are reasons why he thanked God for them; "Which is come unto you, and bringeth forth fruit," &c.

3. Christ can most swiftly drive the chariot of his gospel when he pleaseth, as appears from this, that within a few years after his death, "it was in all the world," that is, in all the airts and principal parts of it, and in opposition to that strict dispensation under the Old Testament.

4. This may serve abundantly to commend a doctrine preached, so that hearers may safely venture on it, as the truth of God, that first, it is the same which the apostles did preach through the world, which may be known by their writings, 1 John i. 3, although it differ much from that which is taught in the Romish church, or any other particular church on earth. Secondly, that it bringeth forth fruits of a holy life, as the gospel hath always some of those fruits among some of them who heard it; and no other doctrine, whether human philosophy, moral precepts, or the law itself, as distinct from the gospel, can thoroughly and inwardly sanctify those who have the knowledge of it, Heb. x. 1. Thirdly, that the fruits brought forth by it, are early and constant, not as the morning dew, which passeth away; for the apostle, from these three, commendeth that doctrine which Epaphras had taught them; "As it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit since the day," &c.

5. That the doctrine preached may be fruitful among a people, it is required, first, that not only they hear it, but also believe it; for, by "knowing," is meant believing; see upon Phil. iii. 8, "Since the day ye heard and knew." Secondly, that use be made of, and hold laid chiefly upon the free grace of God through Christ; this is pointed at, while he giveth unto the gospel the name of "grace," in relation to bringing forth of fruits; "And knew the grace of God." Thirdly, that as the gospel would be sincerely taught by preachers, without any mixture of error, so it would be heard, believed, and the grace which is offered by it, employed by people sincerely, not hypocritically, by pretending only

to do, when really they do not; for the word "in truth," may relate both to Epaphras, his sincerity in preaching, and to their reality in practising what was professed by them; "And knew the grace of God in truth," saith he.

VER. 7. As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Having commended the doctrine, he commendeth the preacher, Epaphras, in opposition to the false teachers, who, it is like, did labour to weaken his authority, because he was not an apostle. He is commended, first, from his relation to Paul, as being dear unto him, and a fellow-servant with him. Secondly, from his office, as being a minister, enlarged from his fidelity in it, and relation to them, ver. 7. Thirdly, from his respect unto them, evidenced by the good report which he had brought to Paul of them.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whoever loveth the success of the gospel, would by all means labour to beget and entertain a good understanding betwixt a faithful minister and his flock; for to this end doth Paul commend Epaphras, as his "dear fellow-servant," &c.

2. Ministers especially should be so far from bearing down the deserved estimation of others, and envying of their zeal in the Lord's work, lest it may detract somewhat from them, Phil. i. 15, that the more zealous a man be for God, the more diligent and faithful in the work of gaining souls, he ought and will (if they themselves be honest) have a greater share of their affections; so because Epaphras was "faithful," he is dear unto Paul; "Our dear fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister."

3. Whatev' odds there be among ministers in their gifts and parts, they ought all to draw together in one yoke for advancing of the Lord's work; seeing there is work for all, Matt. ix. 37, and the meanest may be helpful, 1 Cor. xii. 21. So Paul looketh on Epaphras as his "fellow-servant," though he was much above him for estimation and parts.

4. As the dignity of the ministerial calling is such that it challengeth reverence and respect from all, unto those who are intrusted with it, 1 Tim. v. 17, so a minister, who would be respected either by God or man, ought to be "faithful," eying his Master's glory in the first place, and not his own, 1 Pet. iv. 11; and promoting to his uttermost the spiritual good of those who are committed unto his charge, by omitting nothing which may conduce for that end; doing nothing which may hinder it; preferring their profiting to his own profit, pleasure, and ease, 1 Cor. x. 33; yea, and upon all hazard preferring their profit to their sinful humours, Gal. i. 10, and where this is, it commendeth a minister much; so Epaphras is commended in that he was "a faithful minister."

5. As people would respect all the servants of Jesus Christ, Phil. ii. 29, so chiefly those who are their own ministers, and actually trusted with the charge of their souls; for he will have them respecting Epaphras, because he was their own minister: "Who is for you a faithful minister."

6. To speak unto the deserved commendation of those that are absent, without detracting any thing from their just worth, is praiseworthy, and evidenceth a man's faithfulness much towards those of whom he so speaketh; as the contrary doth argue a man to be unfaithful, Jer. ix. 4; for this was an evidence of his being faithful for them: "He also declared unto us your love," saith he.

7. Then is love praiseworthy, when it is in the Spirit, or spiritual, that is, wrought by the Spirit of God, Gal. v. 22; when it is in a spiritual or renewed heart, 1 Pet. i. 22, 23, and drawn out by spiritual considerations and motives, chiefly such as the work of grace already in the person loved, Gal. vi. 10, or some hope at least that this work may yet be where it is not, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, and not by carnal, natural, or evil motives only, Matt. v. 46: for which reasons their "love" is said to be "in the Spirit."

VER. 9. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Having shown how he had thanked God for them, he mentioneth now his praying for them; and this as a further mean to procure their goodwill. In this verse is, first, the cause moving him to pray, to wit, that he heard by Epaphras of their love. Secondly, the manner of his prayer: it was timeous, constant, and fervent. Thirdly, the first of those things which he prayed for, to wit, increase and fulness of the knowledge of God's revealed will; which knowledge he divideth in two. First, "wisdom," whereby we know celestial mysteries revealed in Scripture. Secondly, "understanding," whereby, as it is distinguished from "wisdom," we know our duty, and the right way of reducing all our knowledge to practice.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the graces of God's Spirit in any are matter of thanksgiving to God, so they are incitements also unto prayer for those who have them; for the graces of the best are but imperfect, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, subject to decay, Rev. ii. 4, and may be abused, 2 Cor. xii. 7. Hence Paul takes occasion from their graces, for which he had blessed God, ver. 4, &c. to pray to God for them: "For this cause we pray."

2. As our praying to God for others doth evidence much our affection to them; so the expressions of our sympathy that way would be timeously begun and constantly continued in. Thus Paul, to testify his affection towards this church, sheweth he prayed for them, and that timeously:

"since the day we heard it," and constantly, "we cease not," which is not to be understood as if he had done no other thing but that; he had a rooted desire after their good, which was always expressed by him in prayer, when opportunity did offer.

3. The knowledge of God's will revealed in Scripture, is to be studied above the knowledge of any other thing besides, as being more sublime, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, and so more pleasant, yea, and more profitable, ver. 27, nor any other; for whilst he prayeth that they may be filled "with the knowledge of God's will," he speaketh of his revealed will, Dent. xxix. 29.

4. They who know most of God's will revealed in Scripture, come far short of what they should know; there is a fullness of knowledge which is attained by none, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, but should be aimed at by all; for notwithstanding the apostle had heard of their knowing the grace of God, ver. 6, yet he prayeth here that they "may be filled with the knowledge of his will."

5. Our desires after spiritual good would be enlarged, and in a manner insatiable: great things would be sought from God, for he is a great King, Psa. xcv. 3, whom it becometh to give largely: so he seeketh "that they may be filled."

6. As "wisdom," or knowledge of divine mysteries, and of the things of faith, is requisite; so also is "understanding," or knowledge of our duty, and of the right way to go about it, with due respect had to time, Psa. i. 3, place, Eccl. v. 1, company, Psa. xxxix. 1, and other circumstances, Luke viii. 18, upon the right ordering whereof the goodness of an action dependeth much, Psa. l. 23: "In all wisdom and understanding."

7. The knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, mainly to be sought after, is spiritual, that is, of things spiritual, 1 Cor. ii. 2, attained unto by spiritual means, as prayer, hearing, reading, and meditation, Psa. cxix. 18, Prov. i. 8, and produced in us by the Spirit of God upon the use of those means, 1 Cor. ii. 10: for he saith, "in all spiritual wisdom," &c.

8. There is no part of this spiritual knowledge and wisdom the attaining whereof is not to be endeavoured by us: some truths are indeed more necessary to be known than others, Heb. vi. 1, yet we are not to slight the knowledge of any revealed truth, Acts xx. 27, "In all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

VER. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

He prayeth, secondly, for increase of holiness to them, or for such a conversation as is "worthy of the Lord," which he brancheth forth in three. First, their aiming in all things to please him, as the scope of all their actions. Secondly, fruitfulness in good works. And thirdly, growth in the saving knowledge of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. Spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and under-

standing, is to be sought after, not to be puffed up with, Coloss. ii. 18, or to rest upon it, Luke xii. 47, but that we may order our practice according to it; for the end why the apostle did pray for knowledge to these Colossians, is, "that ye may walk worthy of the Lord."

2. It is not every sort of walking which is required as the fruit of knowledge, but a "walking worthy of the Lord," which doth not import a dignity or worth in our walking, to recompense the Lord, but only a beseeemingness, and not repugnance to that state whereunto we are called by him, (as the same word is well rendered, Phil. i. 27,) which may consist with many failings and sins of infirmity, where there is self-judging for them, Rom. vii. 14.

3. That we may thus walk worthy of the Lord, it is required, first, that there be an habitual purpose at least in every action, and an actual purpose in actions more solemn and weighty, to please him by our obedience to him; for so the apostle explaineth "walking worthy," to wit, "unto all well-pleasing." Secondly, there must be fruitfulness following upon his pains towards us, and this must be in works which are good, as being commanded or warranted by God for the matter, Isa. xxix. 13, and gone about in the right manner, chap. iii. 17, and no good work is to be omitted unto which we have a calling from God, Luke xii. 14, "Being fruitful in every good work." Thirdly, as fruitfulness in good works maketh much for the increase of knowledge, so, if we would walk worthy of the Lord, we must be growing in knowledge. Ignorance in professors dishonours God as much as fruitlessness; for "increasing in the knowledge of God," is joined with "fruitfulness," and both of them required, in order to their "walking worthy of the Lord."

VER. 11. Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness:

In order to their walking worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing, he prayed, thirdly, that they, being furnished from above with power, might patiently endure whatsoever afflictions they should meet with in the way of their duty, and that with joyfulness.

DOCTRINES.

1. God is well pleased with and much honoured by those who are christianly, and upon right grounds patient under the cross and cheerful; for in order to their walking worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, spoken of ver. 10, he prayeth that they may be "strengthened unto all patience and long-suffering," in this verse.

2. So many are our spiritual adversaries, Eph. vi. 12, so many are their onsets from all hands, 2 Cor. ii. 11, and so necessary is it to overcome not only one but all, Heb. xii. 4, that no less is required than might, and "all might," for carrying the victory in this Christian warfare; for the apostle prayeth for it: "being strengthened with all might."

3. This might, and "all might," wherewith

Christians are furnished, is not their own, they are but weak and infirm in themselves, even though renewed and sanctified, Rom. vii. 18; their strength must be sought by prayer from God, and it floweth from no other fountain than the power of God; for Paul seeketh it by prayer, and pointeth at the power of God, as the great magazine from whence it cometh: "According to his glorious power."

4. The power of God, whereby believers are strengthened, is always glorious, as being still victorious over strongest adversaries, Rom. viii. 37, and making weak believers to overcome principalities and powers, 2 Cor. xii. 9: "According to his glorious power."

5. Christian strength and fortitude is best seen under saddest sufferings; and when crosses and hardships are entertained with patience, and continued crosses with long-suffering, or with patience drawn out in length, it speaketh much of Christian strength and courage; for the effect of their being strengthened with all might is, "all patience and long-suffering."

6. There is an altness, or universality, which ought to be in this grace of patience. First, with respect to the subject: it ought to quiet the whole man, his hand, his tongue, his heart, Psa. xxxvii.

1. Secondly, to the grace itself, as being without any mixture of passion, so far as is possible, James i. 4. Thirdly, with respect to crosses of all kinds, Heb. xii. 4. And fourthly, it ought to be extended to all times, so long as the cross continues, Heb. xi. 27: "Unto all patience."

7. Our patience must not be unwilling, and, as it were, extorted by force, but ought to proceed from a joyful mind, as knowing all things work together for our good; and that one day we shall be above the reach of sufferings, Matt. v. 12. "Long-suffering with joyfulness."

VER. 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

The apostle, in the second part of the chapter, being to propound a short sum of Christian doctrine, doth, by way of thanksgiving, make mention of God the Father his gracious work, whereby he maketh the elect fit to partake of heaven, the bright and glorious inheritance of the saints.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christian joy, if of the right stamp, doth vent itself, not in lascivious expressions or gestures, Eph. v. 4, but in thanksgiving to God; for having spoken of their long-suffering with joyfulness, he sheweth from his own example how their joy should be expressed, to wit, by "giving thanks to the Father."

2. The serious consideration of the admirable work of our redemption, may make a man rejoice under the saddest of crosses; for he pointeth at the reason of their joyfulness, to wit, the work of our redemption, whereof he here speaketh.

3. So admirable is the work of our redemption, and so much of mercy, Rom. v. 8, justice, Isa. liii. 9, 10, and divine condescendence is manifested in it, John iii. 16, that Paul can hardly

speak of this subject without giving thanks to God, and exciting of others to do the like: "Giving thanks to the Father."

4. Heaven is a lightsome and splendid inheritance, full of the light of knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, joy, Psa. xvi. 11, and glory, Dan. xii. 3, for it is heaven whereof he speaketh, while he saith, "the inheritance in light."

5. Heaven is the portion of those only who are saints: no unclean thing shall enter there; for it is "the inheritance of the saints."

6. As the greatest blessing, such as heaven, and all that is in it, are communicable to lost sinners, so that any cometh to heaven proceedeth not from his own merit or worth, but from God's free gift; for it is called an "inheritance," or, as it is in the original, "a lot," in allusion to the land of Canaan, where every tribe enjoyed a portion, not according to their own choice or worth, but as God did measure out unto them by lots. (See Josh. xviii. 10, &c.)

7. None who are unfit or unmeet for heaven, getteth access to it: he "makes us meet" before we partake of that inheritance.

8. Every man in his natural state is unfit for heaven, as being under God's curse, Gal. iii. 13, an heir of hell and wrath, Eph. ii. 3. He finds us unmeet, "and maketh us meet."

9. It is not in the power of fallen man, being dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, to quicken himself and come to God, whereby he might be meet for such a glorious inheritance: it is only God who thus maketh lost sinners meet: "Who hath made us meet."

VER. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;

He explaineth how God doth make us meet, to wit, by drawing us out of that corrupt state of nature wherein we were detained as slaves, and translating us into the state of grace, called Christ's kingdom, as Rom. xiv. 17. This he doth in our effectual calling.

DOCTRINES.

1. Man's natural state is a state of darkness, without the light of saving knowledge, 1 Cor. ii. 14, solid comfort, Isa. lvii. 21, or true holiness, Eph. ii. 2, which in Scripture is called "light," Matt. v. 16; for our natural state is here called "darkness."

2. Every man is kept in slavery under the power of sin and Satan, Eph. ii. 2, so long as he continueth in that his natural state; we are even under "the power of darkness."

3. The affections of man by nature are so far engaged to this sinful state, and so far a slave unto it, that except he be plucked out by the strong hand, there is no freeing of him from it: so far is he from rescuing himself by any power preserved in his own free-will after the fall of Adam: "He must deliver us" by main force, or pluck us away, as the word signifieth, "from the power of darkness."

4. Though God doth not constrain the will of man by force, yet he employeth omnipotent

power to remove his unwillingness, and to make him willing to obey his call, Eph. i. 19. "Who hath delivered us."

5. There is no middle state betwixt the power of darkness and the state of grace; all who breathe are either in the one or the other: the apostle mentioneth no other state, but the "power of darkness" and "the kingdom of his dear Son."

6. The state of grace and God's favour is called "a kingdom," because by grace the hearts of men are subdued to God as king, whose laws are full of equity and moderation, Ps. xix. 7, and who moveth the wills of men sweetly, as being willing subjects in the day of his power, Ps. cx. 3, and doth not drive them on by tyranny or force.

7. The state of grace is "the kingdom of his dear Son," who is appointed of the Father to be head of the church, by whom all do enter that do come to the kingdom, John xiv. 6, and all grace is derived from God the fountain, through him; yea, he dispenseth grace and glory as he thinketh fit, Acts v. 31, even he whom the Father loveth dearly, and through whom all the subjects of this kingdom are dearly beloved also, Mic. v. 5. "The kingdom of his dear Son."

VER. 14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even the forgiveness of sins*;

He explaineth further how we are meet for heaven, and delivered from the power of darkness, to wit, by our redemption in Christ from sin, Satan, and wrath, by virtue of a price paid by the Mediator to the Father's justice, even his blood, which redemption he explaineth from its principal part, remission of sins in justification: for redemption is not here taken for the laying down of the price by Christ, as Luke ii. 38, but for the fruits flowing from it, not for that complete redemption and freedom from sin and misery which the godly shall enjoy at the last day, Rom. viii. 23, Eph. iv. 30, but for that measure of freedom which believers do enjoy here by faith, so that remission of sins is a principal part of it.

DOCTRINES.

1. As all men by nature are in a state of bondage to sin, Satan, and wrath, so there is no freedom from this state, except redemption go before: the word "redemption" supposeth both these.

2. No way of redemption could be accepted but that which is by giving of a ransom and recompence for the wrong done by sin unto divine justice: there is no redemption but "through blood."

3. None was fit to give this ransom but Jesus Christ, God and man: "In whom," to wit, Christ, "we have redemption."

4. Nothing performed by Christ could be a sufficient ransom for this end, except he had crowned all his other actions and sufferings, by laying down his life and undergoing a bloody and violent death: for "we have redemption through his blood," not as excluding his former obedience, but as being the complement and crowning of it, Rom. v. 18, 19.

5. Though Jesus Christ did pay this ransom unto God, Eph. v. 2, and not to Satan, whose slaves we are by nature; yet by virtue of the ransom paid, we are delivered from Satan's slavery and sin's dominion; for the apostle clearing what he had said, ver. 13, of our being delivered from the power of darkness, he giveth this as a reason, "In whom we have redemption through his blood." When God, the just Judge, was satisfied, Satan, the jailor and unjust tyrant, did lose his right to keep us longer in bonds; so that Christ doth justly deliver the redeemed ones from him by force, Heb. ii. 14, Matt. xii. 29.

6. Though Christ, by his obedience and suffering, did pay unto the Father's justice a sufficient ransom for our redemption, yet we do not actually partake of that freedom until we be in him, and by faith united to him: "In whom we have redemption."

7. Sin is the fountain-cause of our slavery and bondage, so that it must be removed before our bondage cease: thus, speaking of our redemption, he instanteth it in "the remission of sin."

8. Because sin is a debt, obliging us either to pay an infinite price, or to undertake eternal wrath, Gen. ii. 17, therefore that sin might be removed, the Son of God behoved to shed his blood for our ransom. We must have "redemption through his blood," otherwise there is no "remission of sin."

9. When this ransom is laid hold upon by faith, and we thereby ingrafted in him, the guilt of sin is freely remitted, and we completely pardoned; so, believing in him, "we have forgiveness of sins."

VER. 15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

The apostle having mentioned our redemption, doth here fall upon a description of the Redeemer, and this, both that in his worth the worthlessness of all other things, whether of angels or dead ceremonies, upon which the false apostles did place equal honour with Christ (chap. ii. 8,) might be seen; as also that the sufficiency of his blood, in order to the redemption of sinners, might the better appear, as being the blood of such an one who is here described. First, from his internal relation to God: "He is the image of the invisible God," as well in respect of his eternal generation, being the express image of the Father, Heb. i. 3, as also that being made man, God the Father did in him, and by him, as a lively image, set forth unto us his glorious attributes of wisdom, mercy, righteousness, and power, John xiv. 9. Secondly, from his eternal relation to all things created: "he is the first-born of every creature," as being from all eternity begotten of the Father before any thing was created, and Lord and Heir of all the creatures, as the first-born among the brethren, Gen. xxvii. 37.

DOCTRINES.

1. The knowledge of Christ's worth doth contribute much to confirm and illustrate the doctrine of man's redemption; the excellency and fulness of Christ being that strong basis and corner-stone

to uphold, and the great mean to carry on, and thoroughly to effectuate that admirable work, 1 Cor. iii. 11. Hence, speaking of man's redemption, he inserteth in this verse, and the three following, this excellent description of Christ, "Who is the image," &c.

2. As the Divine nature, considered in itself, is invisible, it being impossible with bodily eyes to behold him at any time; yea, and also with the eyes of the mind, except indirectly, while we are in this life, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; so the first person of the Godhead is conceived to be in a special manner invisible, because he did never, at least very seldom, appear in any visible shape to men, as the Son did frequently to the patriarchs, and at his incarnation unto all; the Holy Spirit did also appear in the form of a dove, Matt. iii. 16, and of fiery tongues, Acts ii. 3, 4: for the Father is here meant, while he saith, "The image of the invisible God."

3. As the Son is of the same essence, and one God with the Father, so he is a distinct person from him: for he is the substantial image of the Father; and an image must be somewhat distinct from that whereof it is an image.

4. We cannot take up God aright, savingly, or to our comfort, but when we look upon him as he is represented in the man Christ; without whom, God is a consuming fire to sinners; and in whom he is well pleased: so the man Christ is "the image of the invisible God," a glass wherein we may behold him.

5. Jesus Christ is true God, having an eternal being; he is not, as he is God, in the rank of creatures, but hath a lordship and dominion over them all; so much is in these words "the first-born of every creature;" he is "first-born," who was lord over his brethren, Gen. xxvii. 39, but not "first created;" and so there is no ground, from this scripture, to reckon him among the creatures.

VER. 16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

He prosecutes the relation which Christ hath to things created, holding him forth, first, as their Creator, illustrated from a three-fold division of things created: First, from their place, "things in heaven, and things in earth;" secondly, from their natures, "visible or invisible;" thirdly, he divideth the angels, one kind of the invisible creatures, in "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers," whereby probably is meant the several degrees and dignities of angels; but what those are in particular is wholly unknown to us. Secondly, he sets him forth as the last end of all the creatures, ver. 16. Thirdly, as being before them all in time, and so explaineth how he is "the first-born of every creature." And, fourthly, as the upholder of all the creatures, by his power and providence, ver. 17.

DOCTRINES.

1. How bent men are to have but low thoughts of Christ, and of the ransom paid by him for the redemption of sinners, appeareth from the apostle's multiplying of conceptions, to set forth his excellency and worth.

2. Jesus Christ is eternal God, and so his blood of infinite worth, "all things being created by him," as is twice affirmed in this verse, which can be said of none but God, Gen. i. 1.

3. As the Father hath created all things, Gen. i. 1, and upholdeth all things being made, by the word of his power, Acts xvii. 28, so doth also the Son; all those external works are common to the whole three persons, who are only distinguished by their inward personal properties, and order of working: for "by him," to wit, the Son, "were all things created;" and "by him all things consist."

4. There is variety of creatures of different kinds, and different excellences, that man may see somewhat of God in every kind, (Psa. civ. through the whole,) and have somewhat whereupon to exercise every one of his external senses, and every one of his inward faculties for that end: there being things "visible," and so subject to sense; and things "invisible," which cannot be taken up but by the understanding: "Things that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible, invisible."

5. All things created, even the most excellent, not excluding the glorious angels, and those who most transcend others in power and glory, are created by Christ, the work of his hands: and so not only are in the rank of creatures, but of his creatures, and would be so looked upon by us, that he may have his own room in hearts, all other things being contained in theirs; for Paul (that they might not detract any thing of the honour due to Christ, by giving it to angels) extols him as the creator of angels, and of all things, thereby depressing them as poor, weak, dependent creatures: "By him all things were created, that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible, invisible, whether they be thrones," &c.

6. All things are created for Christ; the manifestation of his glory as God, being the chief end of all, so that he is the Alpha and Omega of them all, Rev. i. 8, all things being as from him, so for him. The setting forth of his glory is a rent due by all creatures, and is accordingly performed by them: some give it in an active way, as saints and angels, Rev. xix. 1; some in a passive way, as damned men and devils, Rom. ix. 17; and all in an objective way, as having God's glorious attributes exercised about them, and shining forth in them, in some one, in some another; in the elect, mercy; in the reprobate, justice, Rom. ix. 22; and in all the creatures wisdom, power, and goodness, Psa. xix. 1; for, saith he, "all things were for him."

7. All things created, whether in heaven or earth, visible or invisible, as they have their first being from Christ by creation; so they are continued and preserved in that their being, by his providence: if he should but withdraw his upholding hand, they would quickly return unto their first nothing, Psa. ex. 3: for "by him all things consist."

VER. 18. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

He describeth Christ, thirdly, with relation to his church, showing first he is her head. Secondly, the beginning, root, and fountain cause of the church, and of all the spiritual graces thereof. Thirdly, the first who rose from the dead, never to taste again of death, the only one that ever rose by his own power, and who shall raise again all his members, whereby his glory is made famous in all things, death itself not being excepted.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is the same relation betwixt Christ and his church, which is in the natural body betwixt the head and the members; Christ, as man, being of the same nature with the church, Heb. ii. 14; the same Holy Spirit, which poured out grace on him, Psal. xlv. 2, without measure, John iii. 34, acting and residing in his members, Rom. viii. 9, 11, all spiritual life and motion, Col. ii. 19, yea, the common influences of the Spirit, flowing from Christ to the church, Eph. iv. 7, there being an indissoluble tie betwixt Christ and every believer, John x. 28, Christ being of much more worth than the church is, and sufficiently instructed with power and right to prescribe laws unto, and to govern and save the church, Eph. v. 23, 24, the church again being subject to Christ's rule and government, Eph. v. 24, and, if separated from him, would be wholly dead, as deprived of all spiritual life and motion, John xv. 4: for which causes Christ, and only Christ, is "the head of the church."

2. Jesus Christ is the first beginning, root, and fountain-cause of the church, as being that second Adam, from whom all that new spiritual birth doth flow, 1 Cor. xv. 45; and whose virtue, purchased and applied by him, reneweth the heart, and maketh the graces of the Spirit bud up in it, Cant. iv. 16; so, in relation to the church, he is called the active "beginning," or first principle and author thereof: "Who is the beginning."

3. As Jesus Christ was once among the dead, so he arose by his own power from death, to immortality and life, whereby he hath so vanquished death, that it must render up all his followers, 1 Cor. xv. 54, each of whom shall rise again from death by that same virtue, whereby Christ did raise up himself; for in this respect he is "the first-begotten from the dead," 1 Cor. xv. 20. He maketh them partake of his resurrection, as the first-born did give the rest a share of his father's goods, whereof he was heir.

4. There is nothing of Christ, no, not his very cross and death, whereby his dignity and worth is not made famous; he having by death destroyed him who had the power of death, Heb. ii. 14, and thereby made death itself a passage unto life; for "he is the first-born from the dead, that in all things," even death itself not being excepted, "he might have the pre-eminence."

5. A holy soul, zealous for the glory of Christ, will make this his study, to gather matter for ex-

tolling Christ, even from these things which would seem to obscure his honour most; thus Paul is not content to have him advanced in his works of creation and providence, and in his headship over his church, except he show that even his death did bring honour to him, in relation to which he saith, that in "all things he might have the pre-eminence."

VER. 19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

The apostle giveth a reason why the Redeemer Christ was to be such a person as is before described, taken from the Father's will and pleasure, that he should be one filled with all fulness, both of the Godhead dwelling in him, chap. ii. 9, and of the graces of the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34, that so he might be thoroughly furnished to discharge that great work of mediation, in reconciling the universality of the elect, (whether already glorified, or yet upon earth) to a provoked God, having removed the enmity which was betwixt God and them, by the merit of his sufferings.

DOCTRINES.

1. The restoring of broken man to friendship with God, and all things tending to it, especially that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, should undergo the work of mediation for that end, was a thing well-pleasing unto and appointed by the Father, upon which is grounded the Father's acceptance of what he did for us, as if we had done it ourselves, which otherwise he might have rejected: "It pleased the Father;" it is an emphatical word in the original, implying no less than an inexpressible affection to, and liking of a thing.

2. That any be the church's head, it is necessary that he be full of God, and of all created graces, even both God and man; and therefore it is no less than blasphemy for sinful man, pope, or any other, to assume this title unto himself; for giving a reason of this, among other things why Christ is the church's head, he saith, "for it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell," importing that none destitute of this fulness, is fit to be the head of the church.

3. God calleth none to any office but such as he fitteth for it; for being to employ Christ for reconciling all things to himself, "it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell."

4. Christ the mediator is indued with all fulness of the Godhead, and created graces: "In him did all fulness dwell."

5. No less furniture nor this fulness was required for the thorough discharging of the mediatory office, and making up of friendship betwixt a provoked God and rebellious man; for in order to that, "in him all fulness did dwell."

6. Man now fallen, was once in a state of friendship with God; for reconciliation is the

making up of old friendship; "And by him to reconcile."

7. All mankind did fall from the state of favour and friendship with God, through Adam's transgression, Rom. v. 12; for reconciliation supposeth breaking off of friendship: "And by him to reconcile."

8. As friendship with God may be again recovered; so the first motion of it cometh from God, who received the wrong, and not from us who gave it: "It pleased the Father by him to reconcile."

9. Nothing engaged God to make or prosecute such a motion, but his good-will and pleasure; no need he stood of our friendship, nor any loss which could come to him by our enmity and hatred, Job xxii. 2—4. "It pleased the Father to reconcile all things unto himself."

10. Though Christ and grace be intended for, and accordingly doth light only upon few, Matt. vii. 14; yet the gospel and promise, by which Christ and free grace is revealed and offered, is drawn up in the most comprehensive expressions; and this, that none may hereby be excluded from laying hold on Christ and free grace, but such as do exclude themselves, Hos. xiii. 9; "To reconcile all things, whether things in heaven, or things in earth;" by which broad expressions is meant only the elect, (for there is an universality and world even of those, 2 Cor. v. 19,) and not all the creatures, not devils, or reprobates, John xvii. 9; yea, to speak properly, nor yet the elect angels, who having never sinned, were never reconciled; though improperly they may be said so, in so far as through Christ they were confirmed in grace, being put beyond all reach and possibility of sinning.

11. As the making up of friendship betwixt God and fallen man, could not be without a mediator, so none in heaven or earth could be in all things fitted to mediate in this matter, but Jesus Christ, God and man; "By him to reconcile."

12. The making up of this friendship did stand the Mediator no less than his blood; he did bear the chastisement of our peace, and laid down his life by a most shameful, painful, and cursed death; that so the justice of God being completely satisfied for our wrong, we might enjoy God's peace and favour with life: for he sheweth the way how he reconciled all, "having made peace" (which is all one with reconciliation) "through the blood of the cross," that is, his blood shed upon the cross.

VER. 21. And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight:

What he spoke of reconciliation in general, he applieth to the Colossians in particular, hereby to make way for the following exhortation; and having shown the miserable state wherein they were by nature, as being not only strangers, but

enemies to God, and that because of sin in them, he declareth the gracious change wrought in them, they being put in a state of friendship with God, which Christ had purchased for them, by taking on a true body, subject to fleshly infirmities, though without sin, Heb. iv. 15, and by suffering death in it; and all this that they might be presented free from all sin, and perfect in holiness before God in the last day.

DOCTRINES.

1. That general truths may not be without fruit, being looked upon as remote from us, ministers would labour prudently to apply them to the particular state, and several cases of hearers; so doth Paul here, "You hath he reconciled."

2. As those who are at peace with God, were once in as desperate an estate as others, so it concerneth them who are delivered from that state, and would have the sense of that mercy kept still lively and fresh, and not be puffed up with their present good condition, despising others, to be frequently minding that woful case wherein they were when first free grace did lay hold upon them; so Paul to commend this peace-making mercy in God, doth mind them, "they were sometime alienated, and enemies in their mind."

3. The state of man by nature is most miserable, as being first estranged from God, having no spiritual communion with him, Gen. iii. 8, 9, 24; nor any right or claim to that happiness which floweth from the enjoyment of him, Psa. lvi. 3; so "they were sometime alienated," to wit, by Adam's fall as the fountain cause. Secondly, they are enemies to God, as fighting against God's revealed will, Rom. vi. 19, and hating God, Rom. viii. 7, though not as creator and preserver of the world, yet as he is a just judge, armed with vengeance against those who do wickedly, and God is an enemy to them, Isa. lxiii. 10; who though he love his elect, even in their unregenerate state, with an everlasting love, Eph. i. 4, yet so long as they are unregenerated, and have not fled to Christ by faith, he cannot adjudge them to eternal life, or look upon them any other way than as men under an actual obligation to lie under the curse of the law, which is eternal wrath: so "they are enemies." Thirdly, as the cause of this enmity betwixt God and man, is no wrong done on God's part, Mic. vi. 3, but man's own sin, and wrong done by him to God; so the great part of man's misery by nature, consisteth in this his sin, whereby the chiefest part of him, even his soul and all the faculties of it, to wit, his reason, Eph. iv. 18, will, and affections, Gen. vi. 5, (all of which are here signified by the mind,) are wholly corrupted, from whence doth flow all his actual wickedness, and so much of it, that every action of his is polluted, as proceeding from such a filthy fountain: "Enemies in your mind by wicked works."

4. As there is nothing in us to bud or buy free grace with, so by-past misery, though arrived at the height of enmity against God, will not impede Jesus Christ to work a miracle of mercy, where he intendeth to be gracious; so

"you who were enemies, yet now hath he reconciled."

5. The reconciliation of the elect unto God, is not from eternity, nor the time of Christ's death, nor at any time before the sinner doth believe in Jesus Christ; election indeed is from eternity, Eph. i. 4, and satisfaction for sin was given to the Father's justice by Christ upon the cross, John xix. 30; but justification is not until the self-condemned sinner assent to the bargain, and enter himself heir unto Christ's purchase by faith; for he speaks of them as "now" being reconciled, having embraced the gospel, when before they were "enemies."

6. The second person of the blessed Trinity, in order to our reconciliation with God, behoved to be incarnate, taking on a true fleshly body, not in appearance only, and subject to all the common and sinless infirmities of flesh; "reconciled in the body of his flesh."

7. It was necessary also, in order to our reconciliation, for Jesus Christ to suffer death in his body; that thus Christ our surety, and one of the same nature with us, being seized upon, we the principal debtors might be absolved and set free, John xviii. 8; yet "now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death."

8. As reconciliation with God hath holiness of life following on it, so the sanctifying of those who are reconciled, is a work undertaken by Christ, which he is to carry on from one degree unto another, until he complete it at death, and so present the justified person "holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight;" that is, perfectly sanctified, as the multiplying of words to one purpose doth import, which is not to be accomplished until death, no, nor fully in both soul and body joined together, until the day of his second coming.

VER. 23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

In the third part of the chapter, he exhorts them to persevere in the faith of the former doctrine, not questioning the truth thereof, nor quitting those hopes of good things to come which was begotten in them by it; and that because what he had spoken of their reconciliation, did depend upon their perseverance, and the doctrine was the same with that which at Christ's command was taught through the world by apostles, and which he himself was called by God to preach among the Gentiles.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though a minister may speak to a mixed multitude indefinitely, sometimes as to regenerate persons, 1 Cor. vi. 11, because the better part are so, Mal. iii. 16, 17; and sometimes as to unregenerate, Deut. xxix. 4, because the greater part ordinarily are such, Matt. xxii. 14, yet it is safest for him always to guard what he so speaketh, by propounding some marks and qualifica-

tions of those to whom the thing spoke belong, lest people stumble by conceiving state to be either better or worse than real is, Rev. iii. 17; so Paul having spoken (ver. 22,) indefinitely of them all, as being reconciled, he doth now restrict his speech only to those who had saving faith, and would persevere in it; "If ye continue in the faith."

2. All those who are reconciled to God, having fled to Christ by faith, shall undoubtedly persevere unto the end, as being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5; for he maketh the reality of their reconciliation depend upon their faith: "You hath he reconciled (ver. 21) if ye continue."

3. Exhortations unto perseverance are to be pressed upon, and the danger of apostasy to be held forth even unto those whose perseverance is in itself most certain; these being means whereby the Lord worketh perseverance in them; for here is such an exhortation unto those who were really reconciled, and so should undoubtedly persevere, and the danger of not obeying hinted at, to be no less than to die in a state of enmity to God; "If ye continue in the faith."

4. It is not sufficient once to assent to the truth of the gospel in our understanding, and to embrace the good things offered to us by it in our will and affections, but we must persevere in so doing; for this is the faith of that doctrine in which he exhorteth them to continue, as faith relates both to the will and understanding; "If ye continue in the faith."

5. That Christians may continue constant in the faith of the gospel, as well by assenting to the truth of it, as by embracing the good things offered by it; it is not sufficient to have some fluctuating opinion about the truth of it, but they must endeavour a rooted and well-grounded persuasion that it is the undoubted truth of God, Eph. iv. 14; nor is it sufficient to embrace the good things offered slightly, conditionally, or with a reserve; but sure hold would be taken of them, as we would grip to a thing upon life and death, 1 Tim. i. 15. This firmness and fixedness of faith, both in the understanding and will, in order to perseverance against the blasts of temptations and trials, is set down in the words "grounded and settled." The first is a metaphor taken from edifices, whose foundations used to be laid upon sure ground; the other taken from seats, in which they who sit are unmoveable: "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled."

6. As the hope of life eternal, and of those other good things held forth in the gospel, is a grace which is hardly maintained, there being so many blasts of several temptations to drive us from it, Luke xxii. 31, 32; so nothing tendeth more to the strengthening of hope, than fixedness in the grace of faith; and as we turn fluctuating and irresolute in the point of believing, so will the grace of hope be more or less shaken: for these two are conjoined: "Continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel."

7. It is the duty of ministers to keep up the credit and esteem of their fellow labourers

among their flocks, (though they be much inferior for parts and graces unto themselves,) if so they teach sincerely the same truth, that the work of God may succeed the better in their hands; for probably, because the person and doctrine of Epaphras, as being no apostle, but an ordinary minister, was the less esteemed of by many, Paul conciliates respect to them both among those Colossians, by showing the doctrine preached by him was the same with that which was taught by the apostles to "every creature under heaven," that is, to all mankind, the most noble of creatures; and to some of all sorts of men, not in Judea only, but also among the Gentiles. Which "ye have heard," to wit, by Epaphras, and which was "preached to every creature under heaven."

8. As none ought to take on the calling of the ministry but such as are called to it, so much weight is not to be laid on the testimony of those who run, and are not sent; for Paul being to confirm the doctrine preached by Epaphras from his own authority, doth mention his calling; "Whereof I, Paul, am made a minister."

9. The testimony of a called minister to the truth of a doctrine, ought to have its due respect; "Whereof I am made a minister."

10. The testimony of no particular man whatsoever ought to be further trusted, nor it doth agree with that gospel which was preached by the apostles to every creature under heaven; for Paul, to make his testimony bear weight, mentioneth not only his calling, but also that he preached the same doctrine which was preached unto every creature; "Whereof I, Paul, am made a minister," saith he.

VER. 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

Having confirmed the truth of his doctrine from the authority of his own apostleship, ver. 23, he now confirmeth his apostleship from his sufferings and Christian courage under them, removing also thereby the scandal of his sufferings, in respect they were his share of those sufferings which are measured out by the providence of God to be undergone by mystical Christ, the church; and that they were for the Colossians' and the whole church's good.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christians, and ministers of the gospel chiefly, are to be so far from shunning sufferings, when God calleth them to suffer, or from grudging, or heartless discouragement under sufferings, Luke ix. 26, that they ought to think it their glory to suffer any thing for Christ and truth, and so to rejoice in sufferings; and God's servants may attain to such a frame of spirit as this is under sufferings; so did Paul; "Who now rejoice in my sufferings," saith he.

2. As people are apt to stumble and cast at the gospel, because of contempt, reproach, and other hardships under which those who preach the gospel do for the most part labour, Matt. xiii.

55—57, their stumbling might be in reason prevented, if they would consider that all those sufferings are occasioned in a great part by them, in so far, that if it were not for respect to the souls of people, ministers might do much to shift the cross, as well as others; Paul removed the scandal of his sufferings thus; "My sufferings are for you," saith he. If he had not preached the gospel to the Gentiles, he might have been free of the cross.

3. The sufferings of Paul, and of any other saint, are the sufferings of Christ, and the filling up of his sufferings; not as if Christ's personal sufferings for the redemption of sinners were imperfect, and so to be supplied by the sufferings of others, (see Heb. x. 14;) but such is that sympathy betwixt Christ and believers, Acts ix. 4, and so strict is that union among them, whereby he and they do but make up one mystical Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12, that in those respects the sufferings of the saints are his sufferings, to wit, the sufferings of mystical Christ, which are not perfect nor filled up, until every member of his body endure their own allotted portion and share; "I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ."

4. All that Paul or any of the elect suffereth, are but small relics, being compared with that which Christ hath suffered, as the drops upon the brim of the cup; the great wave of affliction did first beat on him, and being thereby broken, some small sparks of it only do light upon us; "I fill up that which is behind," or the relics and hinder parts "of the sufferings of Christ."

5. The cup of affliction and sufferings goeth about by course and round; as Christ did drink of it first, the apostles only standing by, John xviii. 8, so their course came next, 1 Cor. iv. 9; and thus it hath gone from hand to hand ever since: all are not made to drink of it at once, that some may still be in a capacity to pity, help, and sympathise with others, 2 Cor. viii. 14; so the word rendered "fill up," signifieth to do a thing in our own course or turn.

6. As the personal sufferings of Christ were for the church's redemption, and to satisfy the Father's justice for the sins of the elect, Acts xx. 28, which he did completely, John xix. 30; so the sufferings of the saints are also for the church's good, though not for her redemption or expiation of sin, neither in its guilt nor punishment, 1 John i. 7; yet to edify the church by their example, James v. 10, to comfort her under sufferings, 2 Cor. i. 6, and to confirm that truth for which they do suffer, Phil. ii. 17. In which respect Paul affirmeth his afflictions were "for Christ's body's sake, which is the church."

VER. 25. Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

He confirmeth his apostleship yet further, from his calling to that office, and withal giveth a reason of his suffering cheerfully for the church's good; he was called to be a minister unto the church, chiefly among the Gentiles, of

whom these Colossians were a part, and that by the appointment of God; that he might open up and preach the word of the gospel fully, or that God by his ministry might fulfil that word of prophecy and promise of calling the Gentiles in the days of the gospel, Zech. ii. 11; for "to fulfil the word of God," may be taken either of these ways.

DOCTRINES.

1. The greater honour or the more eminent office a man doth enjoy in the church, he standeth under stricter obligation to undergo affliction for the church's good, and may expect to meet with the more of a suffering lot; for this engageth Paul to rejoice in his afflictions for the church; of "which church," saith he, "I am made a minister."

2. Ministers are but God's stewards and servants under him, who being the great Master of that family, which is his house and church, 1 Tim. iii. 15, will have all things ordered in it, especially the number of office-bearers, their calling to, and their carriage in their office, Eph. iv. 11, 1 Tim. iii. 1, &c., according to his own will and prescript; so Paul was made a "minister according to the dispensation of God;" the word "dispensation" signifies the ordering of things belonging to a family by him who is master of it.

3. Though the apostles were not tied by virtue of their office unto any certain nation or place, their charge being the broad world, Matt. xxviii. 19, yet because every one could not actually, and with advantage to the church, discharge their office towards all; therefore either by divine appointment, or mutual agreement, they did divide their charge among them, Gal. ii. 7; yet so as every one might exercise their apostolic authority in every place, as occasion offered, even without a particular call from the church, Acts x. 34, which ordinary pastors cannot do without the bounds of their own charge, 1 Cor. xiv. 48. In this respect Paul was to exercise his apostleship among the Gentiles; "Which is given to me for you," saith he.

4. The ministers of Jesus Christ must preach the word of God, and his full word, keeping up nothing of the word, Acts xx. 27, and employ the uttermost of their parts, time, and pains in so doing, 1 Tim. iv. 15; for this is to "fulfil the word of God," according to the first sense given in the exposition.

5. Whatever word of promise is given to the church, though it be never so unlikely, it must and shall be fulfilled in God's time; for Paul is made a "minister to fulfil the word," that is, the word of promise for calling of the Gentiles, according to the latter sense.

VER. 26. *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

He confirmeth the truth preached by Epaphras further, from the worth which is in itself, by showing it is an ancient doctrine hid from the former ages of the church, but now made mani-

fest in the fulness of time to his holy apostles immediately, and by them to all other saints, Eph. iii. 5.

DOCTRINES.

1. The gospel, or doctrine of Christian religion concerning Christ, his incarnation, natures, person, offices, death, resurrection, and salvation, thereby acquired unto lost sinners, 1 Tim. iii. 16, is an ancient doctrine, as having been before ages and generations, though not revealed; "Which hath been hid from ages."

2. This doctrine is a mystery, a thing in itself dark and secret, so that nature's light would never have found it out, except it had been made manifest, yea, and is scarcely capable of it when it is revealed; and more particularly, the counsel of God in calling of the Gentiles to the fellowship of the gospel, without tying them to circumcision and the other duties of the ceremonial law, was wholly hid from the Gentiles themselves, and from the greatest part of the Jews, who dreamed of no such thing; yea, the prophets themselves did know but little of it; for this is a part of the mystery whereof he speaketh chiefly here: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages." (See Eph. iii. 3, 5, 6.)

3. Divine mercies are upon the growing hand; Christ and free grace, in its full extent, was but dark under the old dispensation, as being covered with a veil of many ceremonies, 2 Cor. iii. 13; but now the veil is removed, Christ and free grace are clearly preached, and shine forth in their native beauty and lustre; "But now is made manifest."

4. Though the gospel be now made manifest, yet they are only saints and truly gracious who attain unto the full, thorough, and saving knowledge of it, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4; wicked men have some insight in it, but they know it not so as to prize it, 1 Cor. i. 18, so as to believe it, and venture their heaven and happiness upon it, John v. 40, nor yet so as to walk like it, Matt. vii. 22, 23. Thus it is a "mystery made manifest unto the saints."

VER. 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

He sheweth that the cause of this manifestation was God's will and pleasure, and withal commendeth and explaineth the thing manifested, as being a rich and glorious mystery, the sum whereof is Christ himself, who, dwelling in us by faith, is the hope of glory.

DOCTRINES.

1. That the doctrine of salvation through Christ was so long hid from the Gentiles, and but obscurely propounded to the Jews, and now in the fulness of time made manifest; and that it is revealed to one nation and not to another, and worketh effectually in some and not in others, Matt. xi. 25, 26, proceedeth from God's good-will and pleasure, so that it is a matter full of temerity

and rashness to inquire into any higher cause; the apostle rests on this, "to whom the Lord would make known."

2. As the gospel is a mystery, so it is a rich one, wherein God layeth out the great and unsearchable treasures of his mercy, goodness, and grace, John i. 17; and the embracers of this doctrine are made truly rich, as being restored unto favour with God, clothed with a perfect righteousness, Rev. iii. 13, having received a new right unto all the creatures through Christ, Tit. i. 15, those are rich, without which the whole world is but miserable beggars, Rev. iii. 17; "What is the riches of this mystery."

3. The gospel is a mystery full of glory, no doctrine manifesting more of God's glory in all his attributes of mercy, wisdom, justice, and truth, Luke ii. 14; and they who embrace it are made thereby glorious, as having a promise of a right unto, yea, and begun possession of glory now, John iii. 36, and shall attain to the full possession of glory hereafter, 1 John iii. 2; for he speaketh of the "glory of this mystery."

4. It is no small mystery that Christ should take up house with and dwell in sinners; "This mystery," saith he, "which is Christ in you."

5. Jesus Christ is the sum of the gospel, in whom there is much hid and glorious riches, no less than treasures of wisdom and knowledge, chap. ii. 3; so the apostle, explaining what is this mystery, and the riches and glory of it, gives Christ for all, "which is Christ in you."

6. Christ dwelling by faith in the hearts of people here, is the hope of that glory to be possessed hereafter, as being the author of that hope, 2 Thess. ii. 16, as also the earnest of that glory, Eph. i. 14, the full accomplishment whereof shall be the full enjoying of him, Phil. i. 23, whom we do now enjoy but in part and by faith, 1 Cor. xiii. 13; "Christ in you the hope of glory."

VER. 28. Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

He returneth to that argument which he used formerly to confirm the doctrine preached to them by Epaphras, taken from his preaching of the same doctrine himself, and sheweth the principal subject of his preaching was Christ, together with the way how he preached him, labouring to rectify the will by "warning," and to inform the judgment by "instructing," concealing nothing of that saving wisdom revealed in Scripture; and this without respect of persons, endeavouring hereby to bring all men to Christ, by a lively faith, (not to the angels and legal ceremonies, as the false apostles did,) that so they might be made perfect in him.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the main subject of ministers' preaching ought to be Jesus Christ; so the reproofing of sin, exhortation to duty, instruction in knowledge, is no ways inconsistent, but agreeth well with the preaching of Christ; for Paul's preaching did run upon both these; "whom," saith he,

to wit, Christ, "we preach, warning and teaching."

2. Ministers, in their reproofs and pressing of duties, would beware of drawing people off Christ, to seek a righteousness in themselves; but would thereby labour to drive them to Christ for righteousness, to cover the guilt of the sin reproofed, Rom. x. 4; and for furniture to enable them to go about the duty which is pressed, Rom. xiii. 14; that so while they warn and exhort, they may be still preaching Christ; thus did Paul: "whom," to wit, Christ, "we preach, warning and teaching every man."

3. The understanding of man by nature is dark and wholly blind in the things of God; else there were no need of "teaching;" and his will and affections are most perverse and backward; else there were no need of warning; "Warning every man, and teaching."

4. The great part of a minister's work lieth in those two, to inform the understanding by teaching, and to rectify the will and affections by admonition, rebuke, and consolation, which here goeth under the name of "warning;" and these duties are to be discharged by a minister unto all within his charge, without respect of persons; "Warning every man, and teaching every man."

5. As it is the duty of a minister to conceal nothing of saving truth revealed in Scripture, so all saving truth, and especially the doctrine of Jesus Christ revealed in the gospel, containeth in it much wisdom, yea, all wisdom; so that any other wisdom without this, is nothing else but mere folly; for this makes men wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15; so he "taught every man in all wisdom," that is, in the doctrine of the gospel.

6. The public ministry is God's ordinary mean for the reducing of straying and wandering sinners to Jesus Christ; that being clothed with his righteousness, and renewed by his Holy Spirit, they may be made perfect in him, and presented so in the last day; "That we may present every man perfect in Jesus Christ."

7. It ought to be the great end which all ministers should aim at, to get all of those who are committed to their charge (as being ignorant of God's secret decree concerning any of them, 2 Tim. ii. 19,) so brought to Christ, that "every man may be presented perfect in him;" this was Paul's aim.

VER. 29. Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

He further commends his ministry, first, from his great pains taken for bringing about the end of it aforementioned, by labouring and striving; the first word expresseth his great labour in doing, by travelling through so many nations, preaching so frequently, disputing so accurately with the adversaries of truth, 1 Cor. xv. 10. The second expresseth his patience under many hazards and sufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 23. Secondly, from the most effectual help, whereby God did assist him and bless his ministry with success wherever he came.

DOCTRINES.

1. The gaining of souls to Christ, is a work which cannot be effectuated without great labour and pains; yea, and great wrestling and strife, what with men's corruptions and humours, 2 Thess. iii. 2, what with manifold discouragements arising from within a man's self, 2 Cor. vii. 5, and what with multitudes of crosses and sufferings, which Satan's malice doth usually procure unto a faithful minister, 1 Thess. ii. 18. So that whosoever proposeth ease, pleasures, riches and honour unto himself, in the ministerial calling, if so he be faithful, he will meet with disappointment: he must resolve to labour in the word, and under crosses for the word; Paul found it so; "whereunto," that is, that he might present souls unto Christ, "I also labour," (the word signifieth, to labour unto weariness,) "striving."

2. All the labour and striving of ministers will not prevail to the gaining of souls, without Divine assistance, and Christ's effectual working with their labours; "Striving according to his working," saith he.

3. When ministers meet with any success in their ministry, they are not to be puffed up with it, or ascribe the praise to their own diligence, piety, or parts, 1 Cor. xv. 10, but are to acknowledge thankfully God's helping hand in it: so doth Paul: "His working, which worketh in me mightily."

4. The many hardships and sufferings, or extraordinary pains and labour, which attend the ministerial calling, ought not to deter any from it who is otherways fitted and called; because there is Divine help, corroborating strength, and answerable furniture allowed, and will be forthcoming for those who are employed in it; so did Paul find in his own experience: "His working, which worketh in me mightily," saith he.

CHAPTER II.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle maketh way for the refutation of some errors, by an insinuating preface; wherein he sheweth what a conflict he had for them, ver. 1, that they might be comforted, united, and grow in the knowledge of Christ, ver. 2; whose fulness is held forth, ver. 3; and that they might be guarded against seducers, ver. 4; and because of his affection unto them, ver. 5. He exhorts them therefore to adhere to the doctrine received, ver. 6, prescribing some helps for constancy, ver. 7.

In the second part, he refuteth some contrary errors, reducing them to three heads, abused philosophy, superstitious rites, and Mosaic ceremonies, ver. 8, which he refuteth jointly from the fulness which is in Christ, ver. 9, and our being complete in him, ver. 10. He refuteth the necessity of circumcision in special, because in Christ we have the thing signified by it, ver. 11, and an external seal, to wit, baptism in the place of it, ver. 12. Christ had renewed

them without it, ver. 13, and abrogated the whole ceremonial law by his death, ver. 14; yea, and triumphed over all their spiritual enemies, ver. 15.

He concludes therefore against their subjecting of themselves to that yoke, ver. 16, because Christ the substance of those shadows was come, ver. 17. He argueth against the second head, to wit, worshipping of angels, from the ignorance and pride of those who pressed it, ver. 18, and their impairing the honour of Christ as head, ver. 19. He argueth against the superstitious rites, giving some instances of them; because they were freed from the Mosaic rites, ver. 20, 21, and they thereby placed religion in things perishing, without any authority, except human, ver. 22, and taketh off some fair pretexts whereby their patrons did defend them, ver. 23.

VER. 1. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

The apostle being to refute some errors contrary to the former doctrine, maketh way for his work; and yet again insinuateth upon their affections, by letting them know that he was no less solicitous in all his actions and sufferings that they, their neighbouring church at Laodicea, (to whom he willeth this epistle to be read, chap. iv. 16,) and all other churches whom he had never seen in the face, might be established in the truth, than he was for those among whom he had frequently conversed.

DOCTRINES.

1. When a people doth once incline to error, so ready are they to mistake those who would labour to reclaim or establish them, Gal. iv. 16, that a minister would use more than ordinary diligence to insinuate upon their affections, and guide dexterously against mistakes and prejudices, when he is to meddle with any thing of that kind: so the apostle, beside his general preface to the whole epistle, useth here a particular one, when he is to refute some errors wherewith this church was most infested.

2. Though the men of this world be little solicitous for those with whom they have not particular acquaintance, Matt. v. 46, and Christians are sometimes too apt to misjudge those who are dear unto God, according to this rule; yet so many are the ties among the members of Christ, (1 Cor. x. 17,) that, as it is the duty of every one to promote the good of others, even though they had never seen them; so there are some who do make conscience of this duty; for the apostle supposeth that those Colossians were apt to judge of him as minding their case little, however he minded the case of others, chap. i. 29, and therefore he sheweth his solicitous care for them also; and this, that the mistake might be removed; as is imported by the causal particle "for," which knitteth this purpose with the former; "For I would that ye knew."

3. As faithful ministers will necessarily have a fighting life, and many sore conflicts both in

body and spirit, so, to make it known unto the people what sore travail they endure of this kind, if it be not out of ostentation and desire of applause, (2 Cor. x. 18,) is lawful and profitable: for hereby people are made to bear burden with their minister, excited to mind their own salvation the more, (the care whereof lieth so heavy upon their pastors,) and disposed for the more ready receiving of the word from their mouth: so Paul, "I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you."

4. Ministers, in speaking of their affection towards people, and of their pains flowing from it, and Christians also in making known their respects one to another, should beware of flattering those to whom they make their respects and affections known, and should guard carefully against the very suspicion thereof: so Paul, lest he should incur any such suspicion, joineeth not only those of Laodicea, but also all other churches, as partaking equally of his apostolic care; "And for them at Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face."

VER. 2. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

He giveth reasons of his great conflict for their confirmation in the truth, and why he made them know so much; hereby they should reap much solid comfort, their hearts should be inseparably knit together in love, and attain to a large measure of rooted and experimental knowledge of the mystery of the gospel.

DOCTRINES.

1. All men are naturally destitute of solid comfort, and even the people of God, when driven to extremities (chiefly when the truth of the gospel, from which they did draw their consolation, is questioned) do find their comfort much brangled: "That their hearts might be comforted," saith he. So for the time their comfort was shaken, the truth of the gospel being by those masters of error questioned.

2. It is only the doctrine of the gospel which setteth a disconsolate and afflicted spirit most: and to have that doctrine confirmed, when erring spirits would call it in question; and to know also that others dear to God sympathize with us in our strait, contributeth much to our establishment and comfort: so the apostle's care and pains to have them established in the truth of the gospel, which was then questioned, and the manifestation thereof to them did contribute for their comfort: "That their hearts might be comforted."

3. Unity of heart and affections in the church is so necessary, that the want of it doth obstruct much that solid comfort which might otherwise be reaped by the gospel: for he suspendeth their comfort upon their being "knit together in love," as a piece of timber joined by a carpenter; for so the word signifieth.

4. Unity of heart and affections dependeth much upon union of judgments and constancy in truth: where there is discord in the understanding about main and substantial truths, there can be no thorough and lasting concord of the will and affections: for he makes "their being knit together in love," one fruit of their constancy in truth, for procuring whereof his conflict was.

5. Christians are not to rest contented with the knowledge of common and easy principles of Christianity, Heb. vi. 1, but are to grow in the knowledge of other more difficult truths; such as relate to various cases, and the defence of truth against adversaries; and growth in these doth follow upon perseverance in truth: for such a growth is meant by the "riches of understanding" here spoken of, as another fruit of constancy in truth.

6. Neither are they to rest upon a fluctuating, doubting knowledge, but to endeavour a full persuasion and assurance, both of the truth of the gospel in general, and of their own particular interest in the promises thereof; and this also is attained by stability in the truth: for it is the "full assurance of understanding" here spoken of, as another fruit of constancy.

7. Neither are they to rest upon simple knowledge of gospel truths, Matt. vii. 21, but are to know them with affection and love to them; they are to take a proof of the truth which is in them, and so from experience to know them: this much is imported in the word rendered "acknowledge," signifying to know again, and with knowledge above ordinary.

8. As God is the author of the gospel, his eternal wisdom having found it out, Eph. iii. 10, and as Christ was the Father's ambassador to preach and reveal it, Matt. xii. 18; so God, and the Father, and Christ are the prime object of the gospel: the unity of the Godhead, and distinction and order of the persons, the incarnation of Christ, his person, natures, and offices, his saving benefits, and love to sinners, (which are all in themselves dark and mysterious,) being plainly revealed therein; hence the gospel is called "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

VER. 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

The words are read by some as relating to the gospel, in which is contained the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, both of those which are only to be known and believed, and of those which are also to be practised; but they are taken more commonly as relating to Christ, in whom, as in a house of store, is laid up all saving knowledge, to be imparted unto those who labour to know him. Both senses come to one, Christ being the main object of the gospel, and both tend to the same scope, which is to hold forth a sufficiency in Christ and the gospel, in order to the salvation of sinners, without the help of angels or vain traditions, the necessity of whose help was urged by the false apostles.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is in Christ and the gospel sufficiency of knowledge in all things necessary to salvation; Christ being the very way to life, John xiv. 6, and the gospel that doctrine which holdeth forth this way completely, John xx. 31. Christ having also received the habits of all created knowledge, as of all other graces, without measure, that thereby he might be fitted, as Mediator, to bestow the grace of saving knowledge upon all the elect in a competent measure, John i. 16: "In whom are all the treasures."

2. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a thing most precious, and most enriching of those who have it; hence is it called "treasures."

3. Notwithstanding of all that is revealed of Jesus Christ, yet his worth is unsearchable; the most able of created understandings cannot reach the depth thereof; so, "In whom are hid all the treasures."

4. This fulness of knowledge ascribed to Christ maketh nothing for the ubiquitarian error, as if Divine omniscience were inherent in the human nature; for though it should be granted that by these treasures were meant Divine omniscience; yet he saith not "in which human nature," but "in whom," that is, in his person, (to wit, according to the Divine nature,) "are hid all the treasures."

VER. 4. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

He gives a further reason of his so great care to establish them in the truth, or of his mentioning that fulness of knowledge which is in Christ and the gospel, that hereby they might be guarded against all seducers who intended to draw them from Christ and the simplicity of the gospel, whether by false arguments or ensnaring persuasions.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Satan doth endeavour to sow the seed of error wherever the gospel is preached, so ministers should guard people as well against error in opinion as against profanity of life, the one being damnable as the other, 2 Pet. ii. 1. Thus doth Paul here: "This I say, lest any man beguile you."

2. Ministers should labour to instruct their people well in the positive grounds of Christian truth, especially in the knowledge of Christ and that fulness of sufficiency which is in him, as a most sovereign antidote against all those errors which tend to draw the minds of people from him. And whosoever would meddle with the study of controverted truths without hazard and to any good purpose, ought first to drink in the knowledge of those positive grounds; for the apostle proceedeth in this method: first, instructing them in those, and, next, dehorting them from contrary errors: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you."

3. As Satan laboureth to engage ablest wits in the way of errors, so, when such are engaged, they spare no pains for seducing of others, abusing their parts and gifts, otherwise profitable for that

end, to wit, that they may blind the understandings of people by sophistical arguments, which conclude not what they seem to hold forth, and lead captive their affections by deceitful and insinuating persuasions; so those seducers against whom the apostle doth here guard were men endued with logic and eloquence: both which they abused for seducing the people; the first, by using false arguments, "lest any man deceive you;" the word signifieth, to deceive by not-concluding arguments; the second, by using subtle persuasions, called here, "enticing words."

VER. 5. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

He giveth another reason of his solicitous care for them, to wit, the inward affection which he carried to them: hereby also he anticipateth an objection, how he who lived at such a distance, and was unacquainted, could take upon him to prescribe unto them; and sheweth, though he was absent from them in body, yet he was present with them in spirit, both by his affectionate minding of them, and, as it seemeth, by the knowledge which he had of their affairs, through extraordinary revelation, (see 2 Kings v. 26,) and while he commendeth the present appearance of God's grace in them, he doth indirectly exhort them to hold on and persevere.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not always given unto God's children to enjoy the bodily presence of those who might be profitable unto them; for "though I be absent in the flesh,"

2. But there is a spiritual presence, which may and ought to be entertained in case of bodily absence, which consists in mutual minding of the case of others, 2 Cor. vii. 3, in being suitably affected with their case, whether it be good or bad, Heb. xiii. 3, in praying to God for, and by all lawful means procuring the good of others, chap. iv. 12, 13; and especially ministers should never be totally absent from their flocks; but, as Paul, "being absent in the flesh," ought to be thus "present with them in the spirit," and be suitably affected with their case as he was; "Joying and beholding their order."

3. Where the lives of professors within a church are orderly and pious; where the order of church-government is in vigour and flourisheth; where there is unity in a church, every one keeping his station, and helping others in their station, as a well-ordered army with banners: as each of those doth contribute to the rest; so all of them concurring, makes the church a joyful object to beholders: for Paul did "joy beholding their order," to wit, in holy walking, 2 Thess. iii. 6, in exercise of discipline, Tit. i. 5, and in their united on-going, Cant vi. 10.

4. Where the order of church-government chiefly is in vigour, it contributeth much for keeping professors stedfast in their assenting

unto and avowing of the doctrine of faith: Christ's discipline is a strong hedge to defend his doctrine: so, "beholding their order," he beholdeth also "the stedfastness of their faith."

VER. 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

He concludeth the preface, exhorting, that as they had received Christ, to wit, in their judgments, by assenting to the truths which were delivered unto them by Epaphras concerning him, chap. i. 7; and in their hearts, by esteeming of, adhering to, and believing in him, chap. i. 4; and in their practice, by setting about those duties which such receipts called for from them, chap. i. 6; and as in all those they had taken Christ for their only Lord and lawgiver, not as a conjunct only with Moses and the angels; so they would continue constant, and make progress in all those.

DOCTRINES.

1. Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of all saving doctrine, 1 Cor. ii. 2, the marrow of all the promises, 2 Cor. i. 20, the fountain, furniture, and main scope of a holy life, Eph. iv. 21, 22; so that the receiving of him is the thing most to be aimed at in all the ordinances, as that which maketh our knowledge complete, our faith saving, our obedience acceptable: for here, the apostle, pointing at their practice in all those, giveth this as the compend of all, "As ye have received Christ."

2. It is not sufficient that Christ be once received in our understanding, affection, and practice; but there must be constancy and progress made in receiving of him: for the word "walk" importeth thus much; "So walk."

3. The example of progenitors, and our own former practice, layeth on a strong tie to continue constant in our profession and practice, if it be a profession of truth, and practice of duty: for the apostle argueth from their own former practice: "As ye have received, so walk."

4. No custom, though never so ancient, no example of progenitors, or former practice of our own, ought to make us continue in any practice which is sinful; or doctrine which is false and erroneous: for he exhorts them to continue in this doctrine, not simply from the receiving of it, but because they had "received Christ the Lord" in it, and so it was true and orthodox doctrine.

5. As the life of a Christian ought to be in a perpetual motion from sin to holiness, from the world to heaven; so Christ is the way through which he must move: for he commands, "walk in him;" he must be in him by faith, and so reconciled, Rom. viii. 1; the truth of Christ must be the rule of his walking, Eph. iv. 21, 22, and he must walk by virtue of influence which cometh from him, Phil. iv. 13.

VER. 7. Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

He prescribeth some means for attaining to constancy and progress; first, stability of faith in adhering firmly to Christ, and that truth wherein they were taught. Secondly, abounding in this grace. Thirdly, thanksgiving for the same.

DOCTRINES.

1. The first doctrine which ariseth from the scope is already marked, chap. i. 23, Doct. 4, to wit.

2. The gripe which faith doth lay upon Christ is like unto that which the tree hath in the ground, and so is most sure: for though the top of the tree doth shake, yet the root remaineth firm, and its firmness is from the solidity of the ground through which the roots are spread; its fruitfulness also is by virtue of sap conveyed from the ground by the roots; so the stability of believers, floweth from Christ, John x. 28, 29, and sap and influence is conveyed from him by faith, for making them fruitful, John xv. 5. Thus the firmness of their faith is set forth by a metaphor taken from trees deeply rooted: "Rooted in him."

3. The bond of faith, whereby believers are knit to Christ, is like that whereby the edifice is fastened to the foundation; the foundation upholdeth the house, so doth Christ the believer, Matt. xvi. 18. The rest of the building is made conform to the foundation; so the copy of a believer's life is taken from Christ, Matt. xi. 29; the stones of the building, by taking band with the foundation, are fastened one to another; so faith taketh band upon Christ, and in him with others who are Christ's, 1 John i. 7: for faith is set forth with relation to Christ, by a second metaphor taken from edifices strongly founded; "Built up in him."

4. There is an innovating humour in people, flowing from itching ears, 2 Tim. iv. 3, whereby they weary of old truths, and hanker after new-fangled errors, arising from little conscience made to practise according to those truths, John vii. 17. This the apostle guardeth against, by exhorting them so often to continue in the doctrine already received; "As ye have been taught," saith he.

5. As there should be stability, so there would be growth in faith, even to "abounding therein." Faith groweth in breadth by extending our knowledge and assent to more divine truths, Heb. vi. 1; it groweth in height, when one degree of faith is made a step unto a further, as faith of dependence unto assurance, 2 Pet. i. 10; it groweth in length when its acts are not interrupted, but constant, Job xiii. 15; and it groweth in depth, when it groweth more rooted and solid; whereof before, chap. i. 23. And as this growth, even to abounding in faith, is necessary to make a man constant in the faith; so it is prescribed for this end; "Abounding therein."

6. Thanksgiving for what we have received of faith already, is an effectual mean to make us constant, grow and abound therein, which holdeth also in all other graces; "Abounding therein with thanksgiving."

VER. 8. Beware lest any man spoil you through

philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Having ended the preface, he stateth the controversy, reducing those impostors whereof he would have them to beware, lest they should be made a prey of by them, unto three heads: First, abused philosophy, whereby, under pretence of reason, (which was indeed but deceiving,) several things, and particularly, as it appeareth from ver. 18, the worshipping of angels, was pressed upon them contrary unto the word: all which doctrine he rejecteth as vain and deceiving. Secondly, superstitious and foolish rites, obtruded as parts of divine worship, having no other warrant but custom, antiquity, and the authority of men. Thirdly, Levitical rights and Mosaical ceremonies, which were earthly and carnal rudiments, or beginnings fitted for the infancy of the church under the Old Testament: all which he rejecteth upon this general reason, they were not according to the doctrine of Christ, and did draw away Christians from him.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christians are Christ's flock, and the doctrine of the gospel a sheep-fold, wherein so long as they remain they are safe, and when they depart from it, they fall into the hands of seducing heretics, who make a prey of their souls, thirsting after, and rejoicing as much in the drawing of people away from truth, as robbers and thieves do when they carry away the spoil of another man's goods; "Lest any man spoil you." It is a metaphor taken from notorious thieves, who carry away the straying cattle.

2. Though philosophy, as it speaketh the knowledge of truth found out by nature's light, and an accurate way for finding out the same, be not to be rejected, it being in all the parts of it a very useful help for attaining to the more exact knowledge of religious truths revealed in Scripture; and this same apostle frequently making use of it in his accurate method, insinuating proems, accurate and syllogistic argumentations; and that often from common philosophic principles, Acts xvii. 28; yet if philosophy be taken for the errors of philosophers, and if those be obtruded for truths; or, if it presume to reject all religious truths, such as the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion, which are not conclusions grounded upon and flowing from nature's light; or generally, when it is not kept as subservient to Scripture, but presumeth to lord it over them; philosophy so taken, and in those cases, is a very dangerous deceiver in the things of God, and so should be eschewed: for the apostle doth not simply condemn philosophy, but the abuse of it, even that which is deceiving and vain; "Through philosophy and vain deceit."

3. The traditions of men, whereby external rites, without the authority of the written word, are obtruded as worship to God upon the church, having no other warrant but antiquity, custom, and human authority, is the most vain and useless doctrine which ever was taught, and no ways to be submitted unto; so this "vain deceit is after the traditions of men."

4. The Mosaical rites and legal ceremonies, as they were prescribed by God unto the ancient church, to be the first A B C, and easy rudiments of religion, fitted for the then infant state of the church; so the binding power of them all (Christ the substance being come and suffered) doth cease: yea, the practising of them now, the light of the gospel having clearly shined forth, is sinful, and to be eschewed, as speaking really, and by virtue of their first institution, that Christ is not yet come in the flesh, Gal. v. 2; for by these rudiments, or elements of the world, of which he would have them to beware, is meant those legal ceremonies. (See Gal. iv. 3—9.) "After the rudiments of the world."

5. The way of Christ, and of men's own natural wisdom, will not weld together so as to make up a perfect mixture: if it be their way, he will not own it for his: for those false teachers did not quit Christ wholly, but would have joined other things with him, and yet the Spirit of God calleth their way a deserting of him; "And not after Christ," saith he.

VER. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

He refuteth all those impostors, first jointly, because Christ alone is most perfect, and by consequence his doctrine also; as having God fully in his essence and attributes inseparably residing in his person, and this "bodily" or personally, the Divine nature having assumed the human unto the unity of his person; for the word "body," is often taken for the person, as 2 Cor. v. 10; so that it were folly and impiety to seek salvation in any thing but in Christ, and in the doctrine taught by him.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is nothing more effectual for making us adhere to Christ and truth, than the consideration of that worth and fulness which is in him; for the apostle holdeth out the fulness of the Godhead in Christ, that they may not be drawn away from him: "For in him dwelleth," &c.

2. The more a man doth exercise himself in speaking or thinking of Christ, his heart and mouth will be the more enlarged upon that subject: for this being the third time which the apostle hath spoken of this fulness, first, chap. i. 19; next, chap. ii. 3; and now here, we find his speech riseth still higher. Secondly, we learn hence several things of the person and natures of Christ; as first, that he is true man: for the Godhead dwelleth in his human nature as in his temple. Secondly, he is also true God, and so the same God with the Father; for the "fulness of the Godhead," not a portion of God only, or the glorious effects of his power, or his particular gifts and graces, but his complete essence, "dwelleth in him." Thirdly, that he is a distinct person from the Father, the whole Godhead being incarnate, not as absolutely considered, but as it is in the Person of the Son: for it is "in him," to wit, in Christ, not in the Father, that the "Godhead dwelleth bodily." Fourthly,

though there be two natures in Christ; yet he is but one person: for "the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily," that is, personally, or by the virtue of the personal union. Fifthly, this union is inseparable: for "the Godhead dwelleth in him," as in his fixed proper house. Sixthly, notwithstanding of this union, the two natures remain distinct, as the inhabitant is distinct from the house wherein he dwelleth. Seventhly, that God doth hold out himself in the person of Christ God-man, as in a glass, to be taken up and transacted with by lost sinners: or the drift of the purpose is to show that the fulness of the Godhead resideth in him, so as that we may make use of that fulness thoroughly for our salvation, and that there is no need of any thing to be added to him.

VER. 10. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Here are other two arguments: first, Christ is not only full in himself, but all who are in him by faith are complete through him, as having from him all things necessary for salvation. The second argument is against the worshipping of angels in particular, which he refuteth from Christ's prerogative above the angels, as being their head and Lord, upholding and ruling them as his creatures, chap. i. 17, and preserving them in the state of grace through virtue of his mediation, Job iv. 18, and employing them for the church's good, Heb. i. 14; and therefore they are but his servants, and the best of them but our fellow-servants, and therefore ought not to be worshipped, Rev. xxii. 8, 9; nor are they mediators betwixt God and us, that being an honour due to him only, who is their head, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

DOCTRINES.

1. We are in ourselves empty things, being destitute of every thing which might commend us to God: "In him we are complete," and so in ourselves empty.

2. There is a fulness in Christ to be communicated unto all who, being sensible of their own emptiness, do by faith lay hold upon him; "In whom we are complete:" which completeness consisteth in the enjoyment of sufficiency of means for salvation prescribed by him, Heb. iii. 2, and in the imputation of his most perfect righteousness, and in the begun renovation of our nature by the Spirit of Christ, 1 Cor. i. 30, which shall be still upon the growing hand till grace be crowned with glory, Eph. v. 27.

3. Though there be a complete fulness in Christ the mediator, from whence we may supply our emptiness, yet we cannot partake of that his fulness except we first be "in him," and by faith be united to him; so "in him we are complete."

4. The greatest powers and most noble of creatures, being compared with Christ, are but in the rank of subjects and servants; "He is the head, even of principalities and powers."

5. According to the different degree of excellency which is in Christ and the creature, we ought to esteem highly of the one, and meanly of

the other: thus he "is the head even of principalities and powers:" the scope whereof is to show, that he should have the honour which is due to him, and they are to be kept in their own place.

VER. 11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

In this verse, and the verses following, he clearerth how we are complete in him, and reasoneth against the Mosaic ceremonies, especially circumcision, upon their observation whereof, they were tied unto all the rest, Gal. v. 3, therefore he mainly oppugneth it. The argument is, believers have in Christ the thing signified by that ordinance, to wit, spiritual circumcision in the heart, which consisteth in the putting off, by the power of Christ's Spirit, that corrupt mass or body of manifold sins flowing from our innate corruption or sinful flesh; so that there was no need of that carnal circumcision by hands, in cutting off the flesh of the foreskin; which is a good consequence against the urgers of circumcision under the New Testament, where these shadows (Christ the substance being come) are abolished, especially seeing they urged it upon this pretence, that the Gentiles could not be purified without it.

DOCTRINES.

1. In every sacrament, such as circumcision once was, there is an outward sign which is given by Christ's ministers, and some inward grace signified by it, the author and worker whereof is only Christ himself; so there was the outward rite of circumcision by the hands of men, and the inward grace of mortification "without hands;" and "by the circumcision of Christ," that is, by the inward power of the Spirit of Christ.

2. There is no saving grace enjoyed by believers but what they have in Christ, to wit, as the fountain, John i. 16; as the procurer and purchaser of all grace for us, Rom. vi. 6; and as the applier of his own purchase to us, Acts v. 31; so "in him we are circumcised."

3. As our manifold actual sins do flow from the fountain of original corruption, frequently called "flesh," Rom. vii. and viii., so the whole bulk of sin is fitly compared to "a body," because of the weight of guilt which is in it, Rom. vii. 24: and the soul is wholly compassed by it, as it is with our natural body, Gen. vi. 5; yea, and the whole members of the body are made instruments of it, Rom. vi. 19; thus he saith, "The body of the sins of the flesh."

4. They who are in Christ must be about the work of putting off this body, setting against, not only some one sin or other, but the whole mass and body of sin; "Putting off the body of the sins of the flesh."

5. This sinful body is already put off and laid aside in some sense by real believers, to wit, in its guilt, Rom. viii. 1, in its dominion and reign, Rom. vi. 14, in the believer's sincere purpose

and honest resolution, 2 Cor. vii. 11, as also in his hope that one day it shall be put off wholly, 1 John iii. 2; so the circumcision which believers already have in Christ, is designed, "A putting off the body of the sins of the flesh."

VER. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

He doth further enlarge the former reason, whereby he also pre-occupieth an objection against our completeness in Christ, by showing we have in Christ not only the thing signified, but also an external initiatory seal, to wit, baptism, in the place of circumcision now abolished; the fruits of which seal are mortification of sin, and vivification in grace, by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, being laid hold on by faith, which is wrought in us by the mighty power of God, so that there was no place left for circumcision.

DOCTRINES.

1. The sacrament of baptism under the New Testament, succeedeth to circumcision under the old, and is to be administered to children born within the visible church, as circumcision was to infants of eight days' age then, Gen. xvii. 12; for not only both do seal the same covenant of grace, and are initiatory seals of it, but also Paul sheweth that the Christian church is as complete now in Christ, as the Jewish church was, though we want circumcision, because we have an ordinance as good as it was, to wit, baptism. Now, if baptism did not belong to infants, we should not yet be so complete as they were, seeing the covenant was sealed by circumcision both to themselves and their little ones; "Buried with him in baptism."

2. Regeneration consists of two parts, to wit, first, mortification of sin, which ought to be a thorough and constant work, here set forth by our "being buried," which speaketh more than death; and secondly, vivification, or quickening in grace, set forth by "our rising again."

3. Both those parts of regeneration are sealed in baptism, not as if we were of necessity to suppose that those are already in the person to be baptized; but because baptism obligeth the baptized person to set about these, and sealeth up the whole promises on God's part, even those which are for sanctification and grace; so that whenever the party baptized shall lay hold by faith upon the promise, he hath God engaged by word and seal to make it out; thus circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11, and yet it was not to be supposed that every child of eight days' age had actual faith: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen."

4. Though the sacraments do seal up grace to us in the way presently mentioned; yet they do not confer grace upon us by any proper virtue of their own, nor yet is there any principle of power in us which can reach the effectuating of such a work, Eph. ii. 1, although the sacraments

do strongly tie us to the working of it, as said is; it is only the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which is the fountain-cause of our dying to sin and living to God, in so far as by the merit, efficacy, and example of the former we attain unto the latter, in which respect we are said to be "buried with him, and risen with him."

5. It is no less than the infinite power of God which worketh faith in us, and neither sacraments, nor the death or life of Christ, will avail to the subduing of sin, and quickening of grace, except Jesus Christ be laid hold upon by faith; "We are buried with him by faith," and "faith is the operation of God."

6. In our acting of faith in God, we are not to lay hold upon him in a general confused notion, but should eye that in God most, which is most conducing unto that purpose for which we do employ him: thus speaking of faith, as it employeth God for quickening in grace, he casteth an eye to that work of God, whereupon our quickening in grace dependeth most, even "his raising of Christ from the dead."

VER. 13. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

He giveth a farther reason against the necessity of circumcision, to wit, when they were dead in sin and without circumcision, as being Gentiles, (see Eph. ii. 11,) God had quickened them with Christ, making them partake of the life of grace, purchased by him here, and giving them right to the life of glory hereafter, having pardoned all their sins freely for his sake; so there was no necessity, but rather it would be impiety to return unto circumcision now, especially seeing it was urged by the false apostles, as a necessary mean to get their natures purified, and their sins pardoned.

DOCTRINES.

1. Every man by nature, through sin, is in a state of death, he is thereby spiritually dead, as being deprived of all grace, union, and communion with God, (chap. i. 21;) he is also judicially dead, as lying under the sentence of death, pronounced by the covenant of works, Gen. ii. 17; "And you, being dead in your sins."

2. As this state of death doth totally disable us from quickening ourselves, it is only God who quickeneth; so no misery of the creature, though never so comprehensive, as extending itself both to our outward and inward state; though never so desperate, as being past all remedy by human help, will impede God from doing good, and bestowing of the choicest good. Thus, though they were miserable for their inward state, as "being dead," and so incurable by human art; and for their outward state, as being in the "uncircumcision of their flesh," or uncircumcised Gentiles, yet "God doth quicken them."

3. Whenever a man believeth in Christ, he is in the same moment of time united to Christ,

and so that all which he did or suffered, as sustaining our person, or which he procured for our behoof, as being our head, whether in his death, burial, or resurrection, is imputed to us by God, and a right unto them derived to us, as if we had been personally present with him all those times, and given our consent to his doing of all those things in our name, and for our behalf: hence is it that he is said to have "quickened these Colossians together with him," though Christ had risen from the dead some years before their conversion.

4. There is no spiritual life attainable, except our obligation to wrath by the pardon of sin be removed; "You hath he quickened, having forgiven you all your trespasses."

5. This pardon, though dearly purchased by Christ, Matt. xxvi. 28, yet it is freely bestowed upon us; "having forgiven you." The word signifies, freely forgiven, as coming from a root which signifies grace.

6. Pardon of sin is also universal, as leaving no sin unpardoned to him who doth believe and repent, Psal. xxxii. 5: "Having forgiven you all trespasses."

VER. 14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The apostle illustrates the benefit of pardon, and bringeth an argument against the ceremonial law in general, by showing God had not only forgiven the debt of sin, but Christ also by his death had destroyed their obligation to wrath, because of sin, making it altogether useless ever to give faith in law against them; which obligation he calleth "the handwriting of ordinances, which was contrary to us;" alluding to written obligations among men, for sums of money or such like, wherein there is the body of the writ, and the debtor's subscription; answerable to which, there is in this "handwriting," first, the obligation itself, to wit, the covenant of works, and condemning power of the law, Gal. iii. 10. Secondly, our assent and subscription to this obligation, which is the sentence of every man's conscience against himself, whether of Jew or Gentile, whereby he assents to the equity of that curse which the law pronounceth, Rom. ii. 15; but particularly, and over and above, to the Jews this subscription was the practice of the ceremonial law, which being separated from Christ, and looked upon as service acceptable to God in itself, as it was gone about by many of the Jews before Christ came, and so urged by the false apostles upon the Gentiles; the practice I say, of the ceremonial law so considered, was nothing else but a public testification of their own guilt; for example, by killing a beast was testified, that they deserved to die themselves; and seeing the dispute is in this place against the ceremonial law, this "handwriting in ordinances," is to be taken mainly in this sense, although we are not to exclude the former; now the argument concludeth strongly, that seeing the debt is paid, the obligation cancelled, it were madness

and impiety to renew it again, as those did who practised the legal ceremonies.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is an obligation above the head of every man, through virtue of the curse of the law, binding him over to underlie eternal wrath for sin, assented unto, and as it were subscribed by the voice of every man's conscience, and by the practice of the ceremonial law unto the Jews: for this is "the handwriting of ordinances" here spoken of.

2. This obligation must be cancelled, and so the condemning power of the law abrogated, before sin be pardoned, and our right to heaven obtained: for with respect to the impeding of those, it is said "to have been against us, and contrary unto us."

3. None but Christ could destroy this "handwriting;" because none other was able to satisfy the sum contained in it, Heb. x. 9; for he speaks of Christ, while he saith, "blotting out the handwriting in ordinances."

4. It stood Christ no less than his life to get this bond destroyed; for he behoved to pay the sum, before the condemning power of the law could cease, John iii. 16, and to produce the substance, before those legal shadows could vanish, Heb. ix. 12, both which required his death; so he is said to "nail it to his cross."

5. It is a matter of no small difficulty, to get the conscience of awakened sinners quieted, and their hearts persuaded that their obligation to wrath because of sin is removed; therefore the Spirit of God useth so many expressions to assure their heart in this matter. "The handwriting is blotted out," as it were cross strokes are drawn through it; but, lest the heart suspect it may be yet legible, therefore he addeth, it is removed and "taken out of the way;" but, lest haply it should be again found and produced, he addeth yet, it is torn, destroyed, and "nailed to the cross," and so made fully useless ever to witness any thing against the believer.

6. Though Christ did complete this sum contained within this handwriting, while he was hanging on the cross, so as the Father's justice had no more to seek of Christ the cautioner, Job xix. 30, in which sense he did even then meritoriously destroy this handwriting, yet the obligation standeth still in force against the sinner, till he enter himself heir by faith unto Christ's obedience and death; for this was the order agreed upon betwixt the Father and the Son: according to which, the fruits of his death were to be applied, to wit, by faith, John iii. 16; so, it is clear from ver. 13, those Colossians were dead in their sins before their renovation, which was long after Christ's death.

VER. 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

He enlargeth the present argument thus, that Christ, by destroying that handwriting, hath spoiled, disgraced, and triumphed over all our spiritual enemies, especially Satan, the great

general, and his whole army of sins, temptations, death and hell, which fighteth under his banner, and this even by his sufferings: wherein he alludeth to the ancient custom of conquerors, who did disarm their captives, having joined them by two, or more, in chains, made them march before, to their public shame and disgrace, they themselves coming after in their triumphing chariot; so did Christ: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them," &c.

DOCTRINES.

1. The power of devils is very great, as being spiritual substances, strong and mighty angels, Jude 5, 6, having the world and sin under them, as their subjects, Eph. ii. 2; thus from their power they are called "principalities and powers."

2. This great power of theirs is wholly employed to oppose the work of man's salvation; for they are spoken of here as opposites.

3. Satan's power over souls, doth flow from the sentence of condemnation pronounced by the law against sinners, and consists in that dominion which sin hath obtained over them: for upon the blotting out of that handwriting, he was spoiled of his power, as appeareth from the connexion.

4. Jesus Christ having satisfied the Father's justice, and thereby not only enervated the law's condemnatory sentence, v. 14, but also obtained from the Father that sin should no more have dominion over the redeemed ones, Rom. vi. 14, he hath spoiled the devil of that great power which once he had; so that, though he can and doth tempt believers, yet he cannot overcome them; though he hold them in exercise, he cannot mar their salvation, 1 Cor. x. 13, he may bruise their heel, but cannot break their head: thus with Christ's blotting out the handwriting, is conjoined "his having spoiled principalities and powers."

5. Christ doth bring about his most gracious works in a way which seemeth most unlikely to carnal sense: so that no eye, but that of faith, can take him up: what other eye could take up Christ as doing all this upon the cross? when the Jews and Roman soldiers were spoiling him, and parting his garments, that he, even then, and by being spoiled, was spoiling principalities and powers; when they were putting him to shame and disgrace, that he, even then, was making a show of Satan openly, and was rubbing disgrace upon him, overcoming him with his own armour; and when they were triumphing and insulting over him, that even then, he was triumphing over all the devils in hell, as having by his death given the dead blow to their power and kingdom, and so overcame them, by suffering himself to be overcome by them; "Triumphing over them in it," to wit, in his cross.

6. How dear soever the work of our salvation did stand to Christ, it was matter of no small joy unto him to have it thorough, and those who were enemies to it destroyed: for while he is bleeding, and racked with pain upon the cross, he is yet rejoicing and triumphing, and that because this work was thriving: "he triumphed over them in it;" the cross was as a chariot of triumph to him.

VER. 16. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

He draweth a conclusion from the former arguments: that seeing the ceremonial law was now abolished, therefore none should take upon them to judge or condemn others for the not observing any of these ceremonies; or, if any would be so presumptuous, the people of God should not regard their injunctions or censures: and of those ceremonial observances, he giveth two instances; the one relating to that difference to be kept among meats, according to Num. vi. 3, the other relating to that difference observed in days. Days observed among the Jews were chiefly of three sorts: first, anniversary, that returned every year, here designed by the general name of "a holy day." Secondly, lunar, or monthly, which returned every month, as the first day of every "new moon." Thirdly, weekly, which returned every week, and on the seventh day of the week: all which are now abrogated, even the Jewish seventh-day sabbath; and the Lord's day, or, the Christian first-day sabbath, substitute in its place, 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whatever Christ hath purchased by his death, ought to be stood to, and made use of: for upon the abolition of the ceremonial law by Christ's death, he inferreth, "Let no man therefore judge you."

2. Christ the Lord hath given no such power unto any, to make that a part of worship, binding the conscience, which he hath not commanded; "Let no man judge you." It relateth to the false apostles, that they should not enjoin.

3. When men presume to prescribe laws binding men's conscience, we are not to obey what they enjoin, or regard much what they judge of, or inflict upon us for disobedience: "Let no man judge you." It relateth also to the people, that they should not obey such injunctions.

4. There is an abstinence from meats politic, which the magistrate enjoineth for civil ends; there is an abstinence medicinal, which physicians prescribe for preservation or recovery of health; and an abstinence ecclesiastical, when God by his providence, and voice of his church, calleth his people to fasting and mourning: all those sorts of abstinence are lawful; but to abstain from meat upon pretence of holiness and conscience, as if some meats were unclean, or less holy in their own nature than others, 1 Tim. iv. 4, or, as if simple abstinence at any time were a thing acceptable to God in itself, without respect had to the end for which it is enjoined, Isa. lviii. 5; this is sinful and unlawful. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink."

5. Though the first day of the week is constantly to be sanctified by all the Christian churches, and that by virtue of a divine command, 1 Cor. xvi. 2, Christ's example, John xx. 19, and apostolic practice, Acts xx. 7, and other days also, or parts of days are to be sanctified, when God, by his more than ordinary judgments

or mercies, doth occasionally call to humiliation or thanksgiving, Mark ii. 20; yet not only is the keeping of the Jewish set feasts and fasts sinful, but by more than parity of reason, the setting apart of days to the honour of saints and angels, the keeping holy of any day not appointed by God, for some supposed sanctity in that day more than in another; or, as if simple abstinence from work, were in itself acceptable to God, is also unlawful: yea, the dedicating of fixed anniversary days, whether for humiliation or thanksgiving, so as not to take that day again for worldly employments, if God by his providence did call us to it; or, if by change of dispensation he call us unto an exercise contrary unto that for which the day is set apart: such dedication of days is also unwarrantable, as having no example in the church of the Old Testament, nor yet from the practice of Christ and his apostles, and hath in it some kind of limiting of the Almighty, to make the course of his providence to answer our appointed times; "Let none judge you in respect of a holy day."

6. Christians, in the point of obedience to God, and of not subjecting their consciences to the will of men, ought to be very precise; "In respect of a holy day:" in the original it is, "in the part of a holy day;" the false apostles, it seemeth, urged to sanctify a part of those days at least, if not the whole; but Paul will not have them yielding, no, not to a part.

VER. 17. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

He strengtheneth the conclusion by an additional argument, the meaning whereof is: those legal ceremonies were but dark shadows of things to come, to remain only until Christ, who is the truth, body, and substance of them, should come; so that to observe them under the gospel, were in effect to say, that Christ the body is not yet come.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though some of those legal ceremonies were commemorative of things past, Exod. xiii. 8, yet the main use of them all was, to lead the church which then was to the consideration of things to come, to wit, Christ, grace, and the doctrine of the gospel: so by the difference of meats was signified, that the Jews were a distinct people from all other nations, Acts x. 11, 23, which distinction was to be taken away by Christ; their festival days, as the passover, did shadow forth our spiritual delivery by Christ, 1 Cor. v. 7, and the sabbath, our eternal rest, &c. "Which are shadows of things to come."

2. The knowledge which the ancient church had of Christ, was but very dark and confused, being compared with ours, such as the designation of a body by its shadow; they had but "shadows of things to come."

3. How much virtue must there be in Christ, whose very shadow, some obscure and confused notions of him, did afford abundant life and comfort unto all such as were then saved: for all that they enjoyed was but "shadows of things to come."

4. Whatever good was hid under those legal shadows, we have it all fulfilled and made manifest in Christ and the gospel: some of them shadowed forth moral sanctity, and this Christ hath clearly taught, and in his own person fulfilled; some pointed at the expiation of sin, and this Christ by his life and death hath merited; some did signify eternal life, and the participation of it by real believers, and this Christ in the gospel hath clearly unfolded; so the "body is of Christ."

VER. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

He reasoneth now against the first sort of impostors, mentioned ver. 8, to wit, abused philosophy, whereby they did press the worshipping of angels, which he dehorteth from, because those heretics did usurp the place of judges, to prescribe in the matter of worship, thereby making Christians lose their reward of heaven, by departing out of the way which leadeth to it; and because they did cover their heretical spirits, and damnable error of angel worship, by a show of humility and arguments drawn from it, and did determine boldly in those things whereof they were wholly ignorant; and because they were puffed up with arrogance and pride, arising from the gifts of their fleshly and corrupt mind.

DOCTRINES.

1. Error and idolatry, especially in God's worship, is a fearful sin, depriving those who are bewitched with it of the reward of heaven and happiness; for the pressers of angel worship did "beguile them of their reward."

2. Such is the mad zeal of those who are the patrons of idolatry, as to press their idolatrous opinions and practices with so much authority upon the consciences of people, as to adjudge them to condemnation if they receive them not; "Let no man deceive you of your reward." The word signifieth "let no man play the judge over you, defrauding you of your reward," and is taken from the unjust dealing of judges and umpires in races, who would by their authority press men to run out of the way, as they would not lose the prize, and in the mean time make them lose.

3. It hath been, and yet is very usual, for vilest heretics to cover themselves with a more than ordinary show of humility and self-denial in the whole strain of their carriage, that so they may deceive the simple, Rom. xvi. 18. Those heretics did lurk under "voluntary humility."

4. The more of self-denial men of erring spirits do pretend to, they are the more dangerous and the more to be eschewed; so did the apostle enjoin the Colossians to beware of these heretics, so much the more as they pretended to a "voluntary humility."

5. Though a duty or virtue were never so good in itself, yet when men do place it in those things wherein God doth not, it is a sin; for they

made worshipping of angels to be humility, pretending it were presumption to go to God at the nearest, without the mediation of those blessed and glorious creatures; and it was "voluntary," a humility of their own invention, and therefore God makes it a part of their wickedness.

6. Though we are to give civil worship to men in place and authority, or who excel in gifts and graces, Exod. xx. 12, which ought to be given also to glorified saints and angels, in so far as to think reverently of them, to bless God for his goodness to them, and the good which he doth unto us by them, and to long to be in that state of happiness which they enjoy; yet religious worship, as importing the subjection of our minds and consciences unto that which we worship, belongeth only unto God, Deut. vi. 13; and to give it, as the papists do, unto any creature, whether saint or angel, is no less than gross idolatry; for it is condemned here; "And the worshipping of angels."

7. Nothing ought to be received for a part of worship, and much less to be pressed by us upon others as such, the consonance whereof with the mind of God is not fully known and thoroughly understood; so they are condemned for pressing those things on others, which they did not understand themselves; "Intruding into those things which they had not seen."

8. It is the nature of heretics to be most bold and peremptory in those things whereof they understood least: boldness, confidence and ignorance, are the usual companions of heresy, Jude

10. So "they intruded into those things which they had not seen;" it is a word taken from the bold and lofty going of those who acted the persons of kings in stage-plays.

9. As pride and self-conceit are the usual attendants of heresy: so there is often much of pride and self-seeking, where folk pretend to more than ordinary self-denial and humility: vice is then arrived at the highest degree, when it seeketh to veil itself under the pretence of the contrary virtue, Isa. lvi. 5. So those heretics, who pretended much to humility, were "puffed up with their fleshly mind."

10. The mind of man is wholly corrupt and fleshly, and cannot but miscarry when it taketh upon it to judge and command in the things of God, according to the principles of nature's light; hence he calleth the mind "fleshly," or corrupt, with relation to divine worship.

11. There is nothing by which a man will be more readily puffed up than the inward gifts of the mind, if they be not sanctified, such as wit, knowledge, eloquence, memory, &c.; hence he maketh their "puffing up," to flow from the mind: "Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."

VER. 19. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Here is another argument against the worshipping of angels, in that they impair the honour of Christ, as head of his church; making angels to share with him in it, while as they employed

them as mediators with God to obtain grace and salvation, when Christ alone doth discharge the office of a head completely, from whom the whole body of the universal church, being knit to him the head, and one to another by the nerves and sinews of one common spirit, doth receive spiritual nourishment and increase in the graces of God's Spirit.

DOCTRINES.

1. So jealous is Christ in the matter of his own glory, that he will not suffer any other to share with him in it; if saints, angels, pope, or any other, be made use of as conjunct colleagues with and helpers of Christ in his mediatory office, he ceaseth to be a mediator at all unto those who so do; thus will they give but a share of the honour due unto Christ as head, to the angels; they are said, "not to hold the Head," or to be separated from the head, and the virtue which floweth from it.

2. Whatever relation is taken on by Christ towards his church, whether of king, head, husband, brother, friend, or any other, he will be really forthcoming according to all which that relation doth import; so, as head, he doth all that which the head doth to the natural body: he furniseth us with life, motion, spiritual nerves, arteries, &c.: "From whom the whole body," &c.

3. That sufficient influence for grace and spiritual nourishment may be conveyed from Christ the head to sinners, it is necessary that they be united and knit to him, to wit, by the Spirit of Christ, Phil. iii. 12, and the grace of faith, Eph. iii. 17, for those are the "joints and bands" by which this "nourishment is ministered;" he speaks with an allusion to the nerves and arteries of the natural body, whereby it is knit to the head, and hath life and motion conveyed unto it.

4. There is a band of Christian love wrought by the Spirit of God, by which all the members of Christ's mystical body are knit together, for love is the band by which they are "knit together," chap. iii. 14.

5. The more of spiritual influence believers do draw from Christ, they will band the better among themselves; for their being knit together by joints and bands, as the members of the natural body by their respective ligaments, doth depend upon their receiving of nourishment from the head: "From whom the body having nourishment ministered, and knit together."

6. Growth and increase is required in the members of Christ's body; and an increase, not in pride and conceit of gifts, but in knowledge, humility, faith, patience, and other graces, 2 Pet. i. 5, which come from God. This is "to increase with the increase of God," that is, which cometh from God.

7. This Christian increase and divine growth is attained unto by keeping strict union with Christ, and communion with his members; for their increasing with the increase of God supposeth "nourishment ministered from the head," and themselves "knit together by joints and bands."

VER. 20. Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ

from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

21. (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

He reasoneth now against the third sort of impostors mentioned ver. 8, to wit, ridiculous and superstitious rites and opinions in worship and doctrine. He proposed those impostors, ver. 8, in that order wherein they did break up first in the world; but in the refutation he altereth the method, meddling with that first which had most of seeming reason for it. His first argument against this head is to this purpose, that seeing as he hath already proved, they were freed from the Levitical ordinances, (called "rudiments of the world," see ver. 8,) which were instituted by God himself, by what pretext of reason could they submit to superstitious rites, appointed by men? as if they were living in the world, that is, subjected in their consciences to the dictates of men, ver. 20. Of which ordinances he giveth one instance in the matter of meats, and speaketh in the person of some one of those superstitious rabbins, discharging the people to "touch," or rather for eschewing tautology, and as the word doth also signify, "to eat a little" of such a meat; then, "to taste it;" lastly, "to handle it," ver. 21.

DOCTRINES.

1. Through virtue of Christ's undertaking to die for believers, and the Father's acceptance of his death for them, it followeth, that all those benefits which were purchased by his death, do as much belong unto them upon their laying hold upon him by faith, as if they themselves had died; yea, as to this effect they are reckoned to have died with him: thus they were "dead with Christ" to those ceremonies, and so they had no more power over them, than the laws of men have over those who are dead; because Christ having by his death fulfilled what was typified by them, and so purchased freedom to his people from that yoke, they had as much right to that purchased freedom, as if themselves had died for it: "If ye be therefore dead with Christ," &c.

2. Our being freed from the tie of the ceremonial law and ordinances thereof, though appointed by God, doth much more liberate us from the yoke of significant rites and religious ceremonies, which are only instituted by men: he did not abrogate his own ceremonies, that men might appoint theirs: and as it is sinful for men to enjoin such, so it is no less sinful, and a very betraying of that liberty which Christ hath purchased, Gal. v. 1, to give obedience to any such injunctions: for he reasoneth from the abolishing of the ceremonial law, to our not subjecting of ourselves to any ordinance of that kind: "If ye be therefore dead, why are ye subject to ordinances?"

3. The authors of superstition are very diligent to have their superstitious fooleries punctually practised, and their commands for that end exactly obeyed. Thus he brings in the masters of superstition delivering their injunctions, as it were to every man in particular: "Touch not," in the singular number.

4. There is no end of superstitious injunctions, when once given way to: they do both multiply and grow also more strict; so here, first, they forbid them "to eat;" secondly, "to taste;" thirdly, not so much as "to handle."

5. Satan useth most frequently to lay snares and gins in those things whereof men have most frequent use, especially in our meat and drink: he driveth some to sin in those by excess, Isa. v. 11; others by placing religion in simple abstinence from them, under pretence of a more than ordinary mortification; so did these doctors who commanded, "eat not, taste not, handle not."

VER. 22. Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

He addeth two other arguments against those superstitious rites, especially the placing of religion in abstinence from meats; first, they are appointed for the use of man, and perish in the using, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Secondly, all such ordinances are but traditions of men. Matt. xv. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. We should use all things for that end for which God hath appointed them: religion is not to be placed in those things which God hath only destined for a natural or civil use, as the wearing of such a habit, abstinence from such and such meats; for the apostle reasoneth against the placing of religion in meats, because they are appointed only for a natural use; "Which all are to perish with the using."

2. This doth not militate against the religious use of bread and wine in the sacrament, for God hath appointed those elements to be so used: and the two arguments in this verse are to be taken jointly, that no human authority can enjoin the use of, or abstinence from, such a sort of meat, as a part of religious worship: "Which all are to perish with the using, after the doctrines of men."

3. Though church judicatories have power to determine time, place, and other circumstances of worship, which are common to religious and civil actions, and are left undetermined by the word, as being almost infinite, and often changeable upon several occasions, 1 Cor. xiv. 40; yet the Lord hath given no such power unto men, whether the civil magistrate, church-guides, or any other, to enjoin any thing as service to God in itself, which he hath not appointed; nor yet to command any thing to be gone about as a religious ceremony, or significant rite in his worship: all such ceremonies were expressly prescribed by God under the Old Testament, so that it was not lawful to add any thing unto what was commanded them, Deut. xii. 32, and the rule of worship must be no less complete under the New Testament, Heb. iii. 2, and v. 6. So those rites were to be rejected for this same very cause, they were "the commandments and doctrines of men."

VER. 23. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and

neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

He mentioneth three fair pretences, whereof use was made to plead for and commend those superstitious rites; first they were "will-worship;" a giving of more to God than he required. Secondly, the practising of them was an evidence of people's humility in their submissive obedience to the injunctions of superiors. Thirdly, their voluntary and excessive abstinence from meat, sleep, and their other laborious bodily exercises, did tend to mortification, and was a part of mortification, in "neglecting of the body," which the most part of men strive so much to pamper. All which the apostle, having spoken sufficiently to this purpose already, doth refute in one word, to wit, that they had only a show or pretext, but no solidity of reason or wisdom in them; and addeth another reason against the practice of those rites, because thereby they withheld that honour or just care (see 1 Tim. v. 3,) from the body, which ought to be had in the satisfying the necessities thereof.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is no error, the maintainers whereof have not somewhat to say in its defence, whereby they labour to extol it as most heavenly and excellent; thus the doctrine of those superstitious rites pretended to "wisdom," that is, heavenly and excellent doctrine.

2. All that can be said for any error, being rightly weighed, will be found but mere pretences, fair shows, and no solidity of reason; "they had" but "a show of wisdom."

3. As men do like well to serve God with their own inventions, thinking they do thereby give unto God his whole due, and somewhat more: so God will acknowledge nothing for service done to him, but what himself hath required; he approveth willing worship, but not "will-worship;" for it is here rejected, notwithstanding the fair show of wisdom which is in it.

4. For men to give blind obedience unto the commands of superiors, though it pretend to humility and devout submission of mind, yet it is not real humility, but a prostituting of our souls and consciences to the wills of men; so this "humility," or submissive disposition, which was their second pretence, hath but a "show of wisdom" in it, and is not real.

5. Though watchings, fastings, and other bodily exercises, are profitable, and may be lawfully used, if they be referred to the right end for bringing the body in subjection, 1 Cor. iv. 27, lest through too much satiety it take loose reins to sin; and that hereby we may be helped to call on God more ardently, Joel i. 14, providing there be due moderation in using of them, Josh. vii. 10; yet the excessive and immoderate use of those, disabling the body from being serviceable to the spirit, and the placing of worship in them, being considered in themselves, and without relation to the forementioned ends: the neglecting of the body thus, though it hath a show of reason for it, yet it hath no more but a show or pretext, and is a real sin before God: "Which things have a show of wisdom, neglecting the body."

5. As there is an excessive pampering of the flesh, which is sinful and forbidden, when provision is made for it to fulfil the lusts thereof, Rom. xiii. 14; so there is a lawful and necessary care of the flesh or body, whereby things necessary for food and raiment are provided for and bestowed upon it, in so far that strength and health be not in lacking for discharging the duties of our calling: and they who deny this care and honour to it, though even upon a religious pretence, do sin against God; so he condemneth those superstitious rites in this, that many of them did carry with them the neglect of this care; "Not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

CHAPTER III.

THE apostle (having asserted the truth of the gospel, and refuted some contrary errors) exhorteth them next unto suitable practice. And in the first part of this chapter he presseth upon them general duties belonging to all conditions of men.

And first, he exhorteth unto all those duties in the bulk, under the name of seeking heaven, and things heavenly, and of neglecting things on earth. First, because of Christ's being there in great state, ver. 1, 2. And secondly, because they were dead to sin, and things under heaven. And thirdly, though their spiritual life was now hid, ver. 3, yet it should kyth [appear] afterwards, ver. 4. Next he presseth those general duties in two particular branches; as first, mortification, reckoning forth several sins to be mortified; first, more carnal corruptions, ver. 5, and arguments are used, ver. 6, 7. Secondly, more spiritual corruptions, ver. 8, 9; by an argument taken from their regeneration, ver. 9, 10, which he cleareth by removing those things which have no influence upon regeneration, ver. 11. Next he presseth vivification, and the exercise of several virtues; whereof he giveth some examples, intermingling divers arguments, to ver. 16, where he inciteth to the study of Scripture, and giveth a general rule for all our actions, ver. 17.

In the second part, he presseth some duties belonging to Christians, as they are members of families: first, the duties of wives, ver. 18. Secondly, of husbands, ver. 19. Thirdly of children, ver. 20. Fourthly, of fathers, ver. 21. Fifthly, of servants, ver. 22, 23, which are enforced by a promise, ver. 24, and a threatening, ver. 25.

VER. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

He exhorteth from the ground (held forth chap. ii. 12,) of their being risen with Christ, that they would earnestly seek, know, and from knowledge, delight in things which are above, to wit, heaven, happiness, and all spiritual graces;

and not in things earthly, such as riches, honours, pleasures, together with those superstitious rites placed in things earthly and perishing, whereof he spoke before; and that because Christ their head, their husband, is above, at the right hand of God, completely glorified, and intrusted with full power to dispense all things for his people's good, Eph. i. 20—22.

DOCTRINES.

1. Our serious minding of the main and substantial duties of piety and righteousness, would serve to divert exceedingly from unnecessary debates about, and practising of superstitious rites and ceremonies in divine worship: for the apostle (having reasoned against those, chap. ii.) subjoineth this exhortation, to "set their affections on things which are above," as a most excellent diversion from them.

2. The doctrine of salvation and free grace is then rightly learned, when the fruits of a holy life do flow from the knowledge of it; otherways, the grace of God is turned into wantonness, Jude 4. So Paul (having given a short sum of saving doctrine) excitemeth to holiness of life, as the most suitable fruits of such doctrine: "Seek the things which are above," &c.

3. As heaven and glory, so the saving graces of God's Spirit are "things above;" as coming from above, James iii. 17; and elevating the heart of him who hath them, above things earthly, to entertain communion with God here, that he may live above with God for ever, Phil. iii. 20, 21. Thus they are said to be above; "Seeking the things which are above."

4. Heaven, and saving graces which lead to it, are to be sought, and diligently sought: "Seek the things which are above." The word signifieth a diligent search, and is applied to those who are vehemently desirous to have that which they seek, 1 Pet. v. 8; Mark xii. 12.

5. That heaven and things heavenly may be thus sought diligently, we must know somewhat of the worth which is in them, and from knowledge put a price upon them: "Set your affection on things above." The word rendered "affection" here, in the original comprehendeth the operations of the understanding, will, and affections: so it is to know them, from knowledge to affect them, and so to seek them.

6. Things earthly, and things heavenly, are in two contrary balances; so that the more of the heart is given to the one, the other getteth the less: for he opposeth those two, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth."

7. Though we may use the world, and things worldly, yea, and seek them moderately, that so we may have the use of them, 1 Tim. v. 8; yet they are to be sought in subordination, and not in opposition to things heavenly: they must not be sought as our last end and furthest shot, Psal. xlix. 11; not by unlawful means, Eph. iv. 28; or with neglect of God's worship, Matt. vi. 33; not so, but to reverence and submit to God, when he crosseth and disappointeth us in them, Job i. 21; for in this sense he commands, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth."

8. Not only are real believers risen with Christ; first, judicially, Christ's resurrection (as all his other actions, wherein he sustained our person) being imputed to us, so as to obtain what was purchased by them; (see chap. ii. 20, Doct. 1;) and secondly, in their own persons, all believers being really and personally quickened and raised from the death of sin, to newness of life, by virtue of Christ's resurrection, Rom. vi. 4, as that whereby he evidenced his purchasing of holiness for them by his death, which he doth afterward bestow upon them: but besides, all the members of the visible church are in some sense risen with him, in so far as they are actually tied by their professing an interest in him, 1 John ii. 6, and by the covenant sealed in their baptism, Rom. vi. 2, 3, to make use of the virtue purchased by his resurrection, for raising of them up from the death of sin to the life of grace; for he supposeth they are risen with Christ: "If ye be therefore risen with Christ."

9. From this it followeth, that all within the visible church, whether regenerate or unregenerate, are to make use of this consideration of their being raised with Christ, as a strong argument to make them seek after heaven, and endeavour holiness of life. The latter sort being engaged to make use of the power of his resurrection for this end, and having heaven and holiness purchased for them, if they will but by faith flee unto him: the former sort having an actual right unto those things already, as being judicially risen with him, and the begun life of holiness bestowed upon them, by virtue of his resurrection, and more of that virtue for completing of what remaineth in readiness to be communicated unto them, if they will but employ it by faith: for from this ground he enforceth holiness; "If ye be therefore risen with Christ, seek those things," &c.

10. Jesus Christ in his human nature is now in heaven, and not upon earth; else the apostle's argument would not hold, "to seek things which are above," because "he is there."

11. The love which Christians do bear unto Christ, ought to be such, that the very place where he is ought to be lovely for his sake: their affections being wholly set upon it, and upon those things which are in it, and flow from it, or tend towards it: for so he reasoneth, "set your affection on things above, where Christ is."

12. The great glory which Christ our head enjoyeth in heaven, together with the power and authority put upon him for the church's good, especially for bestowing of grace and glory, Acts v. 3, is a strong encouragement to make the members of the church, and chiefly real believers, set about the study of holiness: for this glory and power of his is signified by his sitting at the right hand of God, Eph. i. 20—23; and from this he reasoneth, that they should seek those things which are above, whereby he compriseth all those duties wherein holiness consists, even from this, "that Christ is sitting there at the right hand of God."

VER. 3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

He giveth further reasons to enforce the exhortation; first, they were spiritually dead to sin, and by consequence to those earthly things, so as not to place their happiness in them, or to be sinfully eager in seeking after them. Secondly, though their spiritual life, whereof they were partakers by their rising with Christ, was for the time hid under crosses and infirmities; yet it was surely kept for them by God in Christ, ver. 3, and should hereafter gloriously appear in Christ's second coming, ver. 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. Real believers are spiritually dead, not in sin, Eph. ii. 1, but to sin, Rom. vi. 11, the dominion and reign of sin being shaken off, Rom. vi. 14, and its strength much weakened by the power of grace, Gal. v. 17, though not totally subdued, Rom. vii. 18, and Christ having undertaken to subdue it wholly in them, Eph. v. 27. And all the members of the church (though not as yet real believers) have engaged themselves to employ the strength of Jesus Christ for the subduing of sin; whence in some sense, to wit, judicially, by obligation, they may also be said to be dead: for the apostle supposeth of all of them, every one in his own way, that they were thus dead; for "ye are dead," saith he.

2. The consideration of this, that we are thus dead to sin, is a strong argument for the not-enslaving of our affections to things earthly: for that would argue sin to be yet reigning, and were an adding of fuel to sin, for keeping of it alive, after we have undertaken to be its death: it is used as an argument here to that purpose: "For ye are dead."

3. The spiritual life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, is a life desirable, and only worthy of the name of life, our natural life being but short, uncertain, and common to us with devils, reprobates, yea, and with beasts; and so unworthy to be called "life," being compared with this, 1 Tim. v. 6. "Our life is hid," saith he, speaking of this spiritual life, as if there had been no other life but it.

4. This spiritual life, though really enjoyed by believers, as having grace in possession, 2 Pet. i. 4, and a right to future glory, John iii. 16, yet it is hid: the cross which accompanieth godliness, Acts xiv. 22, together with the many out-breakings and infirmities of the godly, Gal. vi. 1, and the nature of this life, which consisteth in things spiritual, as adoption, justification, &c., Gal. ii. 20, those things make this life not at all discernible by the wicked, 1 Cor. ii. 14; yea, and hardly by the regenerate man himself, who is carried much to judge of things according to sense, Psa. lxxiii. 13, 14. So "our life is hid."

5. Though this life be hid, yet it is surely kept, being hid with Christ in God, as out of the knowledge, so out of the hazard of the world: God the fountain of all grace and glory, having given all the fulness thereof unto Christ the mediator, John iii. 35, from which fulness he is to

bestow so much as is fitting for our condition here, Acts v. 31, reserving the rest to be forthcoming for us in glory hereafter, 1 John iii. 2. "It is hid with Christ in God."

6. So near is that union which is betwixt Christ and believers, that he is their life: his life and theirs are in a kind one, Gal. ii. 20, he having purchased this life for us, 1 John iv. 9, and possessing the fulness of it in himself, John xiv. 6, that he may communicate it unto them, John v. 40, and having communicated the first principles and seeds of it already, Rom. vi. 11, besides that, he is the object of this life, their happiness and life consisting in their knowing and enjoying of him, John xvii. 3; for "when Christ, who is our life," saith he.

7. As Christ now in his bodily presence is removed from us, so he is again to appear, when he shall come the second time unexpectedly, 1 Thess. v. 2, and with great glory, accompanied with angels, and flames of fire, 2 Thess. i. 8, to judge the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. iv. 1: "When Christ shall appear."

8. There is a state of glory both in soul, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, and body, Phil. iii. 21, waiting for the people of God: "Then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

9. This glory of theirs is to be suspended until Christ's second coming: there will be always somewhat unlacking till then; but then their glory shall be complete, which should make us long for it, Phil. iii. 20; "Then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

10. The faith of approaching glory at Christ's second coming, is a strong argument to make us wean our affections from things earthly, and endeavour earnestly the study of a holy life: an heir of a kingdom will not be much taken with petty pleasures, his mind is so carried up to higher things: for Paul presseth them to set their affections on things which are above, because, saith he, "ye shall also appear with him in glory."

VER. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

He proposeth the former exhortation more particularly, by branching out the Christian man's task in two; first, mortification of sin; and presseth them to mortify or put to death their members, not of their natural body, for that were a sin against the sixth command, but of the mass of corruption, or body of death, which was in them, to wit, their corrupt lusts and affections, which are said to be "upon the earth," because they draw the soul down towards earth: whereof he mentioneth some which are carnal and fleshly, as tending to fulfil our unlawful pleasures, "fornication, uncleanness," &c.

DOCTRINES.

1. The work of mortification, whereby a sinner sensible of the evil of sin, Acts ii. 37, 38, doth honestly resolve, Job xxxiv. 31, and accordingly endeavour, 2 Cor. vii. 11, to subdue

sin thoroughly, root and branch, or to put it to death; and this not only one sin, but all known sins, Hos. xiv. 2, eschewing carefully the occasions of sin, Job xxxi. 1, and using all means which may tend to the subduing of it; such as prayer, 2 Cor. xii. 8, hearing of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2, yea, and in some cases fasting, Mark ix. 29; but chiefly, acting faith in Christ for strength, Phil. iv. 13. This is a work so necessary, that the life of glory to be manifested at Christ's second coming cannot be attained without it; for from what he said, ver. 4, of their appearing with Christ in glory, he inferreth, "mortify therefore," &c.

2. This work of mortification is not perfected at an instant; so much of this body of death remaineth still in life, that the best of Christians must make it their daily task to mortify their members, though they be already mortified in part, for, ver. 2, they were dead, and yet he commands here, "mortify your members."

3. Scripture commands for mortifying of sin do not evince a power in men unrenewed, to obey what is commanded; if we consider that such commands are given even to those who are already renewed, and are hereby enjoined to carry on the begun work of mortification towards some perfection, from a principle of habitual grace already infused in them; they are indeed directed also to the unrenewed, who are hereby taught what they ought, but not what they are able to do, Jer. xiii. 23, and are also enabled to do what they ought; the Lord making use of those exhortations as means for conveying of strength to do that which he commandeth to be done; so speaking unto them who were dead, ver. 2, he prescribeth, "mortify your members."

4. There is a body of sin and corrupt nature in us, to which our particular vices, sinful lusts, motions, and affections are as members; our corrupt nature and will making use of them and working by them, as the natural body doth employ its members: besides that, sin doth spread itself through all the members of our body, making each of them servants unto iniquity, Rom. vi. 19. Hence he saith, "mortify your members," meaning those sinful lusts and affections.

5. Not only are the outward acts of fornication or filthiness betwixt parties, both free from the yoke of marriage, to be eschewed, and of uncleanness, whereby are usually signified all other sorts of filthy lusts, Rom. i. 24; but also that impotency of mind, whereby temptations to lust do easily take impression, and are not much resisted, set forth here by "inordinate affection," or, as it may be turned, softness of mind, which yieldeth easily to the temptation; "Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection."

6. Yea, the first inordinate motions of lust in the heart, which are not followed forth after deliberation and advice, and are set down under the name of "evil concupiscence," even those are to be mortified; "Evil concupiscence."

7. We do then set against sin to some purpose when we pursue it to the den, and labour to pluck it up by the very roots, withdrawing from those things which add fuel to it; for he will have them going from the outward acts of filthi-

ness to the inward root, "evil concupiscence;" and to set against "covetousness" also, whereby lust is fed and nourished; "Evil concupiscence and covetousness."

8. Covetousness, which consists in an immoderate desire to acquire or keep worldly riches, is a sin which all Christians are to mortify; not only because it provideth oil to make all other sins burn, but it hath a kind of idolatry in it, as drawing our love, trust, fear, and joy, from God and his service, to be taken up with and laid out upon wealth and riches, more than any other sins: "And covetousness, which is idolatry."

VER. 6. For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

He presseth the exhortation by arguments. The first is taken from the wrath of God, manifested in its sad effects upon those who have continued contumacious and impenitent under those sins.

DOCTRINES.

1. Unbelief of divine promises and threatenings, and obstinate impenitency under sin, go together, the latter following upon the former: for "disobedience" signifieth both misbelief and contumacy, or disobedience.

2. It is not sin in itself so much as obduration in it, which draweth down wrath, chiefly lasting wrath, upon the sinner; "For those things wrath cometh upon the children of disobedience," or children of contumacy.

3. Whatever judgments be already inflicted upon wicked men, they have ground to look for more; for "wrath cometh" in the mean time, and is still coming "upon the children of disobedience."

4. Though the Lord be sometimes wroth with the truly godly because of sin, yet he is not wroth for ever, Isa. lvii. 16, he debateth with them but in measure, Isa. xxvii. 7, 8. The wrath which is due unto, and is accordingly poured forth upon contumacious sinners, is of another kind, as being everlasting, without any mixture of fatherly mercy, and flowing from sin-pursuing justice, Matt. xxv. 4; for which cause he holdeth forth that wrath, "which cometh on the children of disobedience," as being most terrifying.

5. As the consideration of divine wrath is a strong awmband to restrain from sin, so it is most moving, when considered in the sad and woeful experience of those who have found the doleful effects of it: for he mentioneth the effects of this wrath upon others to scare them.

6. Sin keepeth so much of its old interest in the best, and even believers sometimes are so much overtaken with spiritual deadness, Isa. lxiv. 7, that there is need to present the terror of divine wrath unto them, to scare them from sin, and excite them to duty; for the apostle proposeth the terror of divine wrath, even to those believing Colossians.

VER. 7. In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

Here is a second argument, taken from their by-past long continuance in these sins, "when they lived in them," or were in their natural state.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not some more, or fewer particular acts of a man's life, but his ordinary strain and way, according to which sentence is to pass upon his state, whether it be good or bad; it was their walking in sin, and making a daily trade of it, which argued them to be in nature, or "living in sin."

2. Before a man's effectual calling, there is no difference betwixt him and the most godless man that is, so as to make God his debtor either by promise, or because of any worth which is in him to give him grace, Rom. xi. 35; for as long as those Colossians were unconverted, they were as much enslaved to sin as the most obstinate of natural men are: "In the which ye also walked."

3. A man's walking in sin, or his ordinary strain of breaking forth in the outward acts of it, dependeth upon his living in sin, or upon the inward power and dominion which sin exerciseth in him, even as natural life is the cause of outward motion; so the best way to curb the outward acts, is to strike at the life and power of sin within: "In which ye walked when ye lived in them."

4. Our calling to mind of by-past sins, and our long continuance in them, should not be without a holy indignation at them, and at ourselves for them, so as to scare us from them in time coming; for the apostle mentioneth their by-past continuance in those sins, as one argument to scare them from them.

VER. 8. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9. Lie not one to another —

He returneth to the former exhortation of mortifying sin, and exemplifieth it in another sort of corruptions, to wit, those which are more spiritual, whereof he mentioneth six: the first three are sins of the heart, the rest are sins of the mouth.

DOCTRINES.

1. So deceitful are our hearts in adhering to sin, even when they seem to quit it, Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37, that we should not be easily satisfied with our mortifying or subduing of it: for Paul having commanded them to mortify and kill sin, ver. 5, he biddeth them here "put it off," which speaks somewhat further, to wit, a removing of it quite out of sight, as we do dead bodies when we bury them; for so the word sometimes signifieth.

2. Though all sins be not alike thoroughly mortified, there being some more deeply rooted than others, Psal. xviii. 23, yet the grace of mortification striketh at all known sin, and spareth none; for it opposeth sin as it is sin, Gen. xxxiv. 9, and so all sin. So the apostle commandeth, "But now also put you off all

those;" and the particulars after mentioned are not for restriction, but for instance, or example.

3. In the work of mortification, we are not to rest upon the subduing of these sins which are gross and fleshly, but are to proceed against more spiritual sins also, which have as much of guilt in them before God, Gal. v. 20, though not so much of infamy before men; so the apostle exhorteth to "put off anger, wrath," &c.

4. Anger, which (as distinguished from wrath and malice) is an unjust desire of revenge, is a sin unbecoming Christians, and so to be put off; chiefly when wrath is joined with it, which, as it is distinguished from anger, pointeth at the gorging and swelling of the blood about the heart, which fireth the eye and tongue, even that passionate commotion which useth to accompany anger, transforming a man to a very beast, thrusting him forward to act some mischief, Luke iv. 28, 29, and banishing the Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30, 31; "Put off anger, wrath," &c.

5. But then is anger and wrath most dangerous and unbecoming Christians, when "malice" is joined, which, as it is distinguished from anger and wrath, is rooted anger and continuing wrath, making a man implacable, and obstructing the current of pardoning grace, Mark xi. 26, and making all he doth in God's service to be lost labour, Matt. v. 23, 24; "Put off malice."

6. Sins of the tongue and outward man are to be mortified, as well as sins of the heart; they being in some respect more dangerous, Matt. xviii. 7, because more scandalous: "Put off blasphemy, filthy communication," &c.

7. The right order to be kept in mortification, is to begin with the heart, and from thence to proceed to the tongue and outward man: for he commandeth them to put off heart evils in the first place, "anger, wrath, and malice;" and the evils of the tongue, as "blasphemy," &c., in the next.

8. Disgraceful and contumelious speaking against our neighbours, as it is the result of anger, wrath, and malice; so it is a sin to be mortified, as very unbecoming Christians; whether it be by open railing, secret backbiting, Prov. xxvi. 22; by derision, or jeering at their sins and infirmities to shame them, Eph. v. 4, or by imprecations, cursing of and wishing evil unto them, Rom. xii. 14; for seeing the rest of the evils mentioned here relate to our neighbour as their immediate object, we conceive the word "blasphemy" relates to him also, and is to be taken for disgrace in words uttered against men, as Rom. iii. 8; "Blasphemy."

9. Filthy speaking, or speaking of those things which belong to the lust of uncleanness, is unbecoming Christians, and so to be mortified, as an evidence of a rotten heart, Matt. xii. 34, and because it maketh the heart more filthy, infecting also the hearers, 1 Cor. xv. 33; the heart of man being as powder to the fire, easily taken with such temptations: "And filthy communication out of your mouth."

10. The sin of lying, whereby one speaketh that which he knoweth to be false, is a sin also to be mortified; and this indefinitely, whether

we mean the hurtful lie, tending to our neighbour's prejudice, or the officious lie, tending to our profit, or yet the sporting lie, tending to recreation or delight. Scripture condemneth all without restriction, Rev. xxi. 8, and xxii. 5; and all of them violate that natural order which God hath appointed betwixt the mind and the tongue; "Lie not one to another."

VER. 9. Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10. And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;

Here is a further argument enforcing the exhortation taken from the work of regeneration, to which all of them were engaged by their profession and covenant sealed in baptism, and which was really begun in those who were true believers among them, whereof he assigneth two parts; first, "the putting off the old man with his deeds," that is, our natural corruption conveyed unto us by carnal generation, and actual sins flowing from thence, ver. 9. Secondly, "putting on the new man," that is, new and spiritual qualities, whereby our corrupt nature is renewed, the saving and operating knowledge of God in Christ being imparted to it, which work God by his creating power doth carry on, that thereby he may repair his defaced image in man.

DOCTRINES.

1. From this, that our original corruption is called an "old man," and is said to be "put off," by a metaphor taken from clothes, we learn several things of the nature and power of it; first, original corruption spreadeth itself far, even through the whole man, soul, Gen. vi. 5, body, Rom. vi. 19, and all; therefore it is called a "man." Secondly, not only is it born with us, but hath its rise from Adam's fall, Rom. v. 12; it then took life, and is conveyed since from father to son, unto all descending from Adam, Psa. li. 5, by ordinary generation, Luke i. 35, hence it is called an "old man," as also because in the godly it is drawing towards expiration, and upon the declining hand, Rom. vii. 20. Thirdly, it adhereth very closely to us, as a man's garments, and more closely than any garment, yea, or a man's skin, for human art can draw off the one, but only the power of God can free us from the other, Rom. vii. 24. Fourthly, it is not of the substance or being, either of soul or body, it is only an adventitious quality, Eccl. vii. 29, for it is compared to garments. And, fifthly, as old as this corruption is, yet it is very active and restless; not as other things, which as they grow in age, so fall more quiet; but this "old man bath his deeds." And, sixthly, as near unto us, as far spread through us, as old and active as this corruption is, the child of God getteth it "put off," though not fully, yet in its guilt, Rom. viii. 1; and in its esteem and reign, Rom. vi. 14; in his resolution, Rom. vii. 19; and in some measure in his practice and execution, 1 Cor. vi. 11. This

is supposed here; "Seeing ye have put off the old man."

2. According as the old man of our inbred corruption is put off and weakened within, so actual sins flowing therefrom, are weakened without; the old hand and tongue are inconsistent with a renewed heart; "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds."

3. From this, that gracious and spiritual qualities are called the new man, and said to be put on as new garments, we learn several things relating to the nature of grace; first, it spreadeth itself as far through the whole man as sin doth, 1 Thess. v. 23; so it is called a "man." Secondly, it is not born with us, Eph. ii. 3; neither cometh it from the first, but second Adam, Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 8; and is upon the growing hand towards its full strength in the godly, 2 Cor. iv. 16, therefore it is called "new." Thirdly, it adhereth closely to us as sin did, 1 John iii. 9; and yet is not natural to us, but an addition to our nature, 1 Cor. iv. 7; we are naked without it, and it is a beautiful ornament to the soul, as new garments are to the body, Rev. iii. 17, 18, from which the metaphor is taken; "And have put on."

4. We once had this new man, those gracious qualities, at our first creation: for God made man perfect, Eccl. vii. 29; "Which is renewed." It signifieth to restore a thing deformed and antiquated to its ancient form and beauty.

5. Those gracious qualities were all lost unto us, to wit, in Adam; the law dealing with him in that first covenant, as with a public person, representing all who were to come of him, Rom. v. 12. This is supposed while he saith, "which is renewed."

6. It is Christ's aim in giving grace, to recover that in his own which was lost in Adam; "which is renewed," or restored to its ancient form and beauty; "and after the image of him," &c.; that is the image of God which was lost in Adam, Gen. v. 3, and did consist in perfect conformity to God's law, in both the tables thereof, and accordingly is set forth by righteousness and holiness, Eph. iv. 24.

7. The recovery of that which was lost in Adam, as it is begun in the first instant of regeneration, so it is not completed at first, but is a continued action even unto death; "which is renewed." It imports a continued action, the word being in the present time.

8. The sum and compend of this "new man" is the knowledge of God in Christ, not theoretic and notional only, but practical and operative, which worketh such a change both in the outward and inward man, that the grace of God in Christ is really acknowledged by us in our mind, affection, and work, Eph. iv. 21; "Renewed in knowledge or acknowledgment;" for so the word signifieth, and is rendered 1 Cor. xvi. 18.

9. So dead are we by nature to holiness and grace, that no less than creating power is required to work it in us; "The image of him who created him."

10. There is not any argument more moving and effectually exciting unto holiness of life with a sincere Christian, than that which is taken from his engagement to it by profession, and the first

beginning thereof wrought in him already by the Spirit of God; for this is the scope, that they would mortify and put off such and such sins, "seeing they had put off the old man, and put on the new."

VER. 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

He amplifieth, cleareth, and strengtheneth the former reason taken from renovation, by removing false causes of helping or hurting us before God in that matter, such as, first, difference of nations. Secondly, the observation of Mosaical ceremonies, the practice whereof as of a thing indifferent, was allowed for a time unto the Jews, Rom. i. 5, until they should be honourably buried by the more clear and universal propagation of the gospel. Thirdly, polished civility and human learning, which flourished among the Greeks, to whom all other nations were barbarians, chiefly the Scythians, as being more rude and unpolished than any other nation. Fourthly, the different conditions of life, as of master and servant, under which are comprehended all the different states of men in things of this life; of all which he affirmeth that (however some of those differences had their own weight under the Old Testament, yet) now every man, in every state, was alike unto God in the point of renovation and salvation through Christ; the having of those things did help no man, and the want of them did hurt no man, Christ being all which in point of religion can commend us to God.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is usual for men to dream that they will be the better liked of by God because of outward relations, privileges, and accomplishments, which they enjoy beyond others; as that they are of such a nation and stock of people, Matt. iii. 9, that they enjoy such privileges, Jer. vii. 4, that they are tight and smooth in their outward carriage, Luke xviii. 11, that they are great, wise, and rich, John vii. 48; for it is to obviate this apprehension, that those words are added, showing that the having of those things doth not help: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew."

2. It is usual also for men to conclude that God will take the less notice of them for the want of those things, as that they are come of an evil kind, Matt. viii. 8, unpolished and rude in their naturals, John vii. 49, poor and base, Mark v. 28; for it is to obviate this apprehension also, that he sheweth the want of those doth not hurt: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew."

3. Though under the Old Testament God did dispense grace, and the means of grace, with respect had to different nations, yea, to the several sexes, and the outward conditions of men; the Jews being then his only people, Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20, and among them the males, Gen. xvii. 10, and freemen, Lev. xxii. 10, being admitted to enjoy some privileges, which the females and

bondmen enjoyed not; and though the Lord doth yet, under the New Testament, allow and command, that civil respects be put upon men according to their different degrees, Rom. xiii. 7, and hath not abolished all church privileges either, which are to have their own weight and use with Christians, Acts ii. 39; yet he doth not regard any of those in the matter of regeneration, so as either to give grace the more readily, or to dispense with the want of grace, or with intermitting the exercise of grace, because of having those things; or to withhold grace the more, or to think the less of it where it is, because of the want of those things; "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew."

4. Jesus Christ is all which God regardeth in the matter of regeneration: what is lacking through want of privileges or outward eminence is made up in him, and what natural men expect from those, is to be found in him, and much more: for he is all, to wit, which is required in this matter; whatever a man be otherwise, he is well, and commended sufficiently to God if he have him, and he is nought if he want him, even him, who is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30; and this not only because he hath merited all, but by his Spirit he applieth all to, and worketh all in us; "But Christ is all."

5. Before Christ be thus all unto the soul, he must first be in us, not personally, as the Godhead is in the human nature, chap. ii. 9; but spiritually, he being united to us, and we to him by faith, Eph. iii. 17; so "he is all, and in all."

6. Christ, in uniting himself to sinners, hath no exception of persons because of outward respects; he will neither respect nor reject the poor for their poverty, nor the great for their dignity; "He is all, and in all."

VER. 12. Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

Thus far of mortification, from ver. 5. The second branch of a Christian man's task, is the putting on and exercising of several virtues, whereof he numbereth five in this verse; the first three respect our neighbour in misery; the last two respect our neighbour also, but as having injured us; and he presseth them from their election, sanctification, and state of favour with God.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not sufficient to cease from doing evil, but we must also learn to do well, and the same arguments which enforce the one, do also enforce the other; for having pressed upon them to mortify sin in the verses preceding, he exhorts them to do good in this verse, and that by the same argument, as appears from the illative particle "therefore;" "Put on therefore."

2. There is a necessary connexion betwixt the new man, or habits of grace in the heart, and the exercise of Christian virtues in those duties which we owe to our neighbour; for from what

he hath said, ver. 10, of their having put on the new man, he presseth upon them the exercise of those virtues; "Put on therefore."

3. The knowledge of our election in its own nature, is so far from making us loose the reins to profanity, that it layeth on a strict obligation to lead a holy life; so he reasoneth from their election to the exercise of those virtues; for those arguments, as it seemeth, speak only to the truly gracious among them; "Put on therefore, as the elect of God."

4. Then do we rightly pass sentence upon ourselves as elected, when our holiness doth kyth [appear]; for he joineth these two, "the elect of God, holy;" the latter as the evidence of the former.

5. Our having holiness, and our knowing so much, is a strong argument to excite unto more holiness; so he reasoneth from their being holy: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy."

6. The Lord's love of complacency towards us, whereby he delighteth in those who are truly gracious, approving of his own graces in them, John xiv. 21, should constrain us to love him again, and kyth [show] our love in the exercise of those graces which he calleth for in relation to our neighbour; for he calleth them "beloved," to wit, with the Lord's love of complacency, seeing it is distinguished from his eternal love of election; and reasoneth from their being so beloved; "Put on as beloved."

7. We ought to have a most inward sense of, and sympathy with, the misery of others: "Put on bowels of mercy;" the word expresseth such an intense motion of the heart and soul, that the very fleshly bowels are commoved by it.

8. Our sympathy with others under misery ought not to be inward only, but outward also; by helping them in their misery, according to our power; which is here expressed by "kindness," which they were to "put on."

9. The grace of humility, whereby a man, from the sense of his own infirmities, hath a moderate esteem of himself, Phil. ii. 3, and desireth that others should have such an esteem of him also, 1 Cor. iii. 5, is most necessary, as making way for more grace, 1 Pet. v. 5: "Humbleness of mind."

10. The grace of meekness, which maketh a man tractable, so that he is not easily provoked with the fooleries, infirmities, and lesser wrongs done unto him by others; as also "long-suffering," which moderateth anger, even under greater injuries; both of those are necessary graces: for hereby we are made to bear with the infirmities of others, and so to cure them, Gal. vi. 1, we are kept from avenging ourselves, Rom. xii. 18, 19, and in our patience made to possess our souls, Luke xxi. 19. "Put on meekness, long-suffering."

VER. 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

He recommendeth the practice of meekness and long-suffering, which consists in bearing with

and pardoning even of real injuries done by others, and persuadeth them unto it from Christ's example in pardoning us.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christians are not so perfect but they will be in some things unpleasant; yea, and sometimes injurious to others. This is supposed while they are commanded to "forbear one another."

2. It is the duty of Christians mutually to tolerate and forbear one another, even though they be injurious: for hereby a man overcometh himself and his own corrupt nature, which thirsteth after revenge, Prov. xvi. 32; hereby he overcometh and shameth the party who did him wrong, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, and keepeth God's way in overcoming of him, Rom. xii. 17, 21. "Forbearing one another."

3. It is not only required of Christians to forbear avenging of themselves, but also to forgive and pardon those who have done them wrong; which, besides ceasing from private revenge, doth import the banishing of malice and desire of revenge out of the heart; yea, and loving those who do us hurt, Luke vi. 27. "Forgiving one another." Only the magistrate is not hereby bound up from executing his office against public offenders; nor yet private men are discharged from having recourse to the magistrate for attaining restoration to their right, and reparation of their wrongs; providing they be not acted with private spleen and a spirit of rigour, Phil. iv. 5, but with zeal to justice, and pity to their party, lest he, and others also, be hardened in mischief; for magistracy is God's ordinance, Rom. xiii. 4, and so may be employed by Christians.

4. Duties of forbearance and forgiving wrongs ought to be mutual; there being no man who hath not somewhat which maketh him the object of those duties, James iii. 2: so, "forbearing one another" is required.

5. The fore-mentioned duties are also to be gone about by all, towards all, without exception of persons or quarrels; the rich are to perform them towards the poor, as well as the poor towards the rich: for he speaks indefinitely, both as to persons and injuries; "If any man have a quarrel against any."

6. The more a man attains to know that Christ hath pardoned himself, he will be the more inclinable to show forgiveness unto others: hence he speaketh confidently to such, "even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

7. The example of Christ is a most convincing pattern for exciting us to pardon and forgive one another, if we consider either the greatness of those wrongs which he pardoneth, Isa. i. 18, or our baseness who do injure him, Isa. xl. 22, or his omnipotence to right himself of the wrongs done unto him, Matt. x. 28. Hence the apostle holds forth this pattern, "even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

VER. 14. And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

The apostle, following the metaphor taken from garments, exhorteth them to put on the grace of charity, as the upper garment above the

rest, and so more precious than the rest; commanding it from this, that it is a tie or bond which knitteth all the members of the church together, and maketh all their several gifts and graces cohere, and so be useful for the public good; whereby the church is made a perfect body, able to discharge those actions which are competent to it.

DOCTRINES.

1. The grace of charity, whereby from the fountain of love to God we do love our neighbour, Matt. xxii. 37, 38, is a most necessary grace; for whatever we do without it is not the exercise of any saving grace, but, at the best, only of a moral virtue, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3; and the acts of all other virtues relating to our neighbour are commended by it, and so are ascribed to it, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c. Hence the apostle commandeth to "put on charity," as the upper garment, "above all those."

2. As the church while rent asunder is a disjointed and lame body, unfit for discharging those actions which are competent to it, (the rent and scattered members not working together for the church's good, but rather employing their parts, and abusing their esteem for graces, to their own mutual prejudice;) so, such is the nature and power of this grace of charity, that it knitteth together all these scattered members, and makes their graces and gifts subservient to the good one of another, and chiefly to the good of the whole; so that the church is hereby made a complete, entire body, which was lame without it. In this sense "charity" is called "the bond of perfection."

VER. 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

He exhorts, first, unto a peaceable frame of spirit towards others, such as God approveth of; so that when any strife should arise among them, it might be overruled, and, as it were, judiciously composed by this peaceable temper: and this, because they were called by God to entertain peace, and were all members of one body. And secondly, he exhorteth unto mutual thankfulness for favours received; for as all the former duties relate to men as their immediate object; so it would seem this of "thankfulness" must relate to man also.

DOCTRINES.

1. The virtue of peace, importing a sweet quieting of a man's own turbulent affections, such as pride, envy, malice, &c., Isa. xi. 13, and a peaceable inclination towards the procuring and preserving of concord with others, Heb. xii. 14, is most necessary for Christians: "And let the peace of God rule."

2. It is not every peaceable frame of spirit which is to be sought after, but that whereof God is the author and approver; which for attaining unto, or preserving of concord, will dispense with the loss, not of truth and holiness, Heb. xii. 14, but only of what is our own, especially with the

restraining and curbing of our sinful and turbulent humours, 2 Cor. xii. 20. So it is "the peace of God," to wit, whereof he is author and approver, which should "rule."

4. Our esteem of peace ought to be such, that when any contention doth arise, our love to peace may presently compescer [appease] it, if it be possible; or, at least, order all our actions which we are put to for our own necessary defence until it be composed, Gen. xiii. 8, 9: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." It is a metaphor taken from judges in plays or strifes, unto whose decree all were bound to stand.

5. Christians are called in a singular manner to put on this peaceable temper; for Christ doth frequently enjoin it, John xiii. 34: nothing marreth their work more than the want of it, whether the thriving of grace in their own heart, or the success of the gospel towards others, 1 Cor. iii. 3; they are called to be members of an excellent society, and so ought to be peaceable in it, 1 Thess. v. 13: "To the which also ye are called."

6. The invisible church of real believers is one mystical body, knit by faith to Christ their head, Eph. iii. 17, and by the bond of love among themselves, John xiii. 35; and the visible church is one politic body, 1 Cor. xii. 27, conjoined with Christ the head, and amongst themselves by the external profession of the same truths, which union is sealed by their partaking of the same sacraments, 1 Cor. x. 17: "In one body."

7. The consideration of this, that Christians are one body, is a strong argument to excite unto peace: "In one body."

8. Gratitude and thankfulness for favours received from others, so as in our affections to prize the receipt, to acknowledge it unto the bestower, and to recompense it according to our power, and as the necessity of the benefactor or common decency doth require; this is a virtue necessary for Christians, as for other causes, so that peace may be kept: peace being broken, as frequently for injuries received, so sometimes for favours not recompensed, 1 Sam. xxv. 7, 13: therefore unto the exhortation to peace, he subjoineth, "and be ye thankful."

VER. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The apostle having spoken of many virtues, and it being almost impossible to speak of all, he exciteth them to the diligent study of Scripture, as the rule of all virtues; showing also what use they should make of Scripture. First, for themselves, that they might be made completely wise by it. Secondly, for others, that they might teach and admonish them by it. Thirdly, in relation to God, they might take matter for spiritual praise unto him from it.

DOCTRINES.

1. Ministers should excite people to the diligent study of Scripture; and people ought to be diligent in the study of it, so as they may become

familiar with it, and it may sink down through the ear and brain to the heart, and reside in it, being fixed there by frequent reading, hearing, meditating upon, *Psa. i. 2*, and conferring about it, *Psa. cxix. 46*; whereby also they may attain to a copious measure of the knowledge of it: for, saith he, "Let the word of Christ," that is, chiefly the Gospel, *Heb. ii. 3*, not excluding other Scriptures (for the prophets were inspired by the Spirit of Christ, *1 Pet. iii. 19*, and did also write of Christ, *John v. 39*; so that whole Scripture is the word of Christ): "and let it dwell in you." It is a metaphor, which speaketh inward receiving of it, and familiar conversing with it: "and let it dwell richly," or copiously, "in you."

2. There is that in Scripture which is sufficient to make a man completely wise unto salvation, as containing all things necessary to be believed or practised, *2 Tim. iii. 15*; for this is the first fruit to be reaped by the study of Scripture, it affordeth all wisdom: "In all wisdom."

3. It is not only the duty of ministers, but also of private Christians, keeping themselves within their station, and not usurping upon the ministerial calling, *Rom. x. 15*, privately to teach and instruct, as also to admonish and reprove one another; and the knowledge and wisdom which they draw from Scripture, is to be employed for this end, next after the advancing of their own salvation, and not for vain ostentation, profane jesting, or idle jangling, *1 Tim. i. 4, 6*: "In all wisdom, teaching and admonishing."

4. The duties of teaching and admonishing among private Christians ought to be mutual; there being none so complete for knowledge, so straight in his practice, but he standeth in need to have those duties performed sometimes to him by others: "Admonishing one another."

5. Singing to God with the voice is a profitable ordinance of God's worship under the gospel; as not only holding forth that which the word read doth, but also staying the heart upon the sweet and lively meditation of the matter which we sing, and is most natively directed to the glorifying of God as its proper and immediate scope: "Singing," &c.

6. The psalms of David, and other scriptural songs in the Old Testament, may, and ought to be sung in this part of gospel-worship: for saith he, "in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing," &c. or rather, "singing in psalms, hymns," &c. for so the words may be rendered: now all agree that hereby are designed the psalms of David, and other scriptural songs, though there be some difference about the kind of songs which are intended to be expressed by every one of those in particular.

7. That this piece of gospel-worship may be gone about acceptably, first, our songs would be spiritual, and this not only for the matter, but because of the assistance of God's Spirit, and of a spiritual frame of heart which is required for singing aright, *Eph. v. 18, 19*. Secondly, they would carry with them a kind of delectable edification to the hearers, as being sung with grave and melodious tones, and so, as the matter which is sung may be understood by others, *1 Cor. xiv. 15*. This is "to sing with grace," or, in a delicious and edifying strain, so is the word taken,

chap. iv. ver. 6. Thirdly, except the heart and inward affection be stirring in this duty, the outward grace and delectation which is in it serveth for no purpose: "Singing in your hearts." Fourthly, in singing, the heart ought to be taken up immediately with the thoughts of praise unto God, arising from the consideration of the matter, which will always furnish a heart rightly disposed with some thoughts of that kind: "Singing in your hearts to the Lord."

VER. 17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

He giveth a common rule for all our actions, that they be undertaken in Christ's name, and that thanks be given to God the Father through Christ for the event or success of them.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christians are not left to their liberty, neither in things necessary, nor yet altogether in things of their own nature indifferent, neither in their words nor deeds, nor yet their thoughts, (for those are deeds or actions of the mind and inward man,) to do as they please in them; but are tied to walk by a rule: and particularly they are to be ruled by Christ's command, with in-calling of his help, and aiming at his glory in what they do. For "doing in his name," importeth all those three, *Matt. xviii. 20*; *Luke x. 17*; *Psa. xxxi. 3*; and however it be impossible to have an actual purpose to glorify him, and employ his help actually for every thought, word and deed, yet the heart would be habitually inclined to do all things in his strength, and for him; and in solemn and weighty actions there ought to be an actual purpose of this kind; "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

2. They who do all things in Christ's name, will have still abundant matter of thanksgiving to God in the close of their action, whatever be the event; "Do all things in the name," &c. "giving thanks."

3. We ought to acknowledge thankfully our obligation to God for the success and event of our lawful undertakings, not sacrificing to our own net, or burning incense to our own drag, *Hab. i. 16*. "Giving thanks to God, and the Father," or "God, who is the Father:" (see upon chap. i. ver. 3.) which excludeth not the other two Persons; but the Father being the fountain of the Deity, from whom, as the prime author, all good things are derived to us, by mediation of the Son, the Holy Spirit working them in us; therefore, that the order both of nature, and of operation may be pointed at, for the most part we express the Father both in our prayers and praises, not excluding the other two Persons.

4. There is no address to the Father in any duty whether of prayer or praise, so as to be borne through, or accepted in it, but through Jesus Christ: "Giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

VER. 18. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

In the second part of the chapter, from this verse to the end, he treateth of these duties which relate to Christians, as they are members of a family; and as there are in every complete family three pairs, to wit, husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, whereof the latter is always inferior to the former, so he points at the duty of each of those, and still beginneth with the inferior first, because their duty, through the subjection which is in it, is more difficile, and being made conscience of, is a strong motive unto the superior to go about his duty also: and first he presseth upon wives their duty, to wit, subjection to their husbands, from the convenience of it; and qualifyeth their subjection, that it be "in the Lord."

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not sufficient for Christians to go about general and common duties of Christianity, but those other duties which belong to them as being in such a state of life, to wit, as magistrates, ministers, husbands, wives, &c. must be in a special manner made conscience of: for the apostle having exhorted unto those common virtues, doth now press such duties as concern Christians in their particular vocations: "Wives, submit yourselves," &c.

2. It is much for the advantage of religion, that particular families be well ordered, the whole church being made up of those; hence he presseth much those duties which belong unto Christians, as they are members of families; "Wives, submit yourselves," &c.

3. The sum of a wife's duty unto her husband is subjection, which comprehendeth a reverend esteem of him, Eph. v. 33, respectful speaking of him, and to him, 1 Pet. iii. 6, and obedience to him in things lawful, 1 Pet. iii. 5, 6. "Wives, submit," or, "subject yourselves."

4. However a woman's own husband may come far short of others in parts, gifts, and every other thing which deserveth reverence and subjection, 1 Sam. xxv. 17; yet because of the ordinance of God, and that peace may be kept betwixt man and wife, she is to submit to her own husband, respecting none so much as him, depending upon none, and following the counsel and direction of none so much as his; for so the apostle commands, "submit unto your own husbands."

5. Whether we consider the ordinance of God enjoining, or the infirmity of the woman, as being of the weaker sex, or the great inconvenience of jealousy, hatred and strife which followeth upon the denying of this subjection, it will be found most convenient, equitable and just, that "wives be subject unto their husbands, as it is fit."

6. The subjection which a wife doth owe unto her husband, is in the Lord Christ, so that in the first place she is to subject herself to Christ, and from love unto him, to subject herself to her husband; whence it will follow, that she is to obey him only in things lawful, and to look upon her subjection as service done unto Christ, which may give her comfort against an unkind return

from her husband: for he saith, "as it is fit in the Lord."

VER. 19. Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

He exhorteth husbands to love their wives, as the sun and fountain of all other duties which they owe unto them, and forbiddeth bitterness towards them.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the Lord hath not tied inferiors to their duty, leaving superiors at liberty to do what they will in theirs; so the mutual discharge of duty betwixt superiors and inferiors, man and wife, parent and children, master and servant, is a great encouragement for every one to set about their own duty, as having not only the command of God for it, but an answerable return from those to whom they do that duty; hence, having pressed upon wives their duty, he doth the like unto the husbands, and so in the rest: "Husbands, love your wives."

2. The sum of an husband's duty towards his wife is to love her: there ought to be love in affection, and that most ardent, Eph. v. 25, and love kything [appearing] in its effects, so as that he delight to dwell with her, Prov. v. 18, 19, so as that he lovingly direct and instruct her, 1 Cor. xiv. 35, and so as he provide for her in all things according to his power, which either her necessity, or dignity of her rank doth call for, 1 Tim. v. 8. "Husbands, love your wives."

3. Bitterness in husbands towards their wives is a sin to be eschewed much: he is to eschew bitterness in his affections, so as not to hate her, or cold-risely to love her, Eph. v. 29; bitterness in words, so as not for light causes to upbraid her, or speak contumeliously of her, Prov. v. 18. And most of all, bitterness in deeds, which consists in giving her little or no trust in the family, Prov. xxxi. 15, and withholding from her things necessary for her supply, 1 Tim. v. 8; and in beating her, which is contrary both to the law of God, Eph. v. 29, and nature, so that very heathens did abhor it: "Be not bitter against them." It is a word taken from unsavoury meats, pointing that his conversation in all things should be delicious, sweet, and meek.

VER. 20. Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

He commandeth children (under which, according to the Scripture-phrase, are comprehended sons and daughters-in-law, &c. Ruth i. 11, 12, &c.) "to obey their parents in all things," to wit, which are not forbidden by God; and that because hereby they do acceptable service to God.

DOCTRINES.

1. The sum of children's duty towards their parents, is obedience: the Greek word signifieth obedience flowing from inward respect and reverence, which is to be testified by reverent

speaking of them, and to them, Prov. xxx. 17, by giving obedience to their just commands, and by thankful recompensing of them, chiefly if they fall in straits, 1 Tim. v. 4. "Children, obey your parents."

2. Age, or length of days, doth not exempt children from this duty: children indeed, who are foris-familie [have left the family], are not tied to cohabit with parents, and to care for their affairs according to their direction, Gen. ii. 24, (which children under the care of parents are tied unto, as being members of the family, Gen. xxxvii. 12, 13,) but they are bound to reverence their parents, and be thankful to them as their necessity requires: for the word rendered "children," signifieth all who are begotten, whatever be their age: "Children, obey your parents."

3. The obedience which children owe to parents is of very large extent, even to "all things," to wit, not forbidden of God, Eph. vi. 1, which limitation is insinuated here in the reason of the command, "for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord:" but it extendeth to all other things; as, if the thing commanded be good, or in its own nature indifferent; yea, even their rigid and seemingly unreasonable commands in things indifferent, are not to be disobeyed, Gen. xxii. 6, if they cannot be otherwise diverted: "Obey your parents in all things."

4. As obedience to parents is very acceptable to God: for it is enjoined in the first command with promise, and in the second table, Eph. vi. 2. So that children may obey their parents aright, it is necessary that their hearts be touched with some reverence towards God, and a desire to please him, which will make them endeavour to please their parents in God, and thereby do service to God: the argument used to enforce obedience, beareth this much; "For this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

VER. 21. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Because parents are apt to abuse their parental authority, and chiefly the fathers, therefore he enjoineth them to use it moderately, not irritating their children, lest they turn heartless and discouraged.

DOCTRINES.

1. Fathers are so to use their authority over their children, as not to give them just cause of irritation, whether by denying unto them that which is their due in food, raiment, or means of education, 1 Tim. v. 8, or by commanding things in themselves unjust, 1 Sam. xx. 31, 34, or by unjust and rigorous commands about things in their own nature indifferent, or inveighing with bitter words against them, chiefly when there is no cause, 1 Sam. xx. 30; and lastly, by beating them either unjustly, when there is no fault, or immoderately, when there is a fault; for just and moderate correction is necessary, Prov. xiii. 24. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger."

2. As parents by too much indulgence towards children make them sluggish, petulant, or profane, Prov. xxix. 15, so by their immoderate

severity, they make them dull to action, heartless and discouraged, from whence do flow sicknesses and death, yea, and sometimes desperate contumacy; the consideration whereof should make parents deal more gently with them, though they are always to keep up their fatherly authority; for this is given as a reason of the prohibition, "lest they be discouraged."

VER. 22. Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.

He entereth here upon the duty of servants, whereon he insisteth, not only because their condition was most hard, as being for the most part bought slaves; but also it seemeth several of them, under the pretence of christian liberty, did shake off the yoke, their masters being non-converted pagans, whereby Satan did labour to make the gospel odious; therefore Paul exhorteth them to obey their masters (who had power over their flesh and bodies) in all things lawful; and that not only when their masters were present, as labouring merely to please them, but in sincerity of heart, as fearing the all-seeing eye of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. The freedom purchased by Christ, and offered in the gospel, is spiritual, to wit, from the condemning power of the law, Gal. iii. 13, from the dominion of sin, Rom. vi. 18, and the legal ceremonies, Gal. ii. 4. But it is not bodily; the gospel doth not meddle with a man's outward estate; as it finds him, whether master or servant, so it leaves him, 1 Cor. vii. 21; for some of those Colossians were servants before conversion, and they remain so after conversion; "Servants," &c.

2. The dominion which masters have over servants, is only in things temporal and of the flesh: it is not over the conscience, in which respect there is only one Lord and Master, Matt. xxiii. 8, and Lawgiver, James iv. 12; for they are called "masters according to the flesh," to denote the extent of their mastership.

3. As the sum of those duties which servants owe to their masters is obedience, which supposeth respect and reverence; so this obedience is of large extent, to wit, to all things not forbidden of God, even their rigid commands are not to be contemned, 1 Pet. ii. 18; "Obey in all things your masters."

4. When servants seem respective to their master's person, and careful of what concerneth him, himself being present, or when they know the thing which they do will come otherwise to his knowledge, but at other times are unfaithful or careless, this is a sin much to be condemned, as evidencing they seek no more but human approbation; so that if they can get the eyes of men sylored [blinded], they regard not the anger of God; for this is "eye-service" here condemned, and he calleth those who are guilty of it, "men-pleasers;" "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers."

5. Servants ought to serve their master and to mind his business "in singleness of heart," that is, whether their master be present or absent, whether their actions come to his knowledge or not, they may be always most seriously affected towards the thriving of his affairs; "In singleness of heart."

6. It is only the impression of the awe and fear of God upon the heart, which will make a servant mind his master's business thus: service in singleness of heart, is not to be expected from wicked servants, destitute of the fear of God; "But in singleness of heart, fearing God."

VER. 23. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men;

He qualifyeth the obedience required, that it be hearty and willing, without grudging, because therein they ought to eye God more than man: for the negative particle doth not deny simply, but comparatively; so that "as to the Lord, and not to men," is to the Lord more than to men, as Mark ix. 37.

DOCTRINES.

1. Servants should do their service willingly, carefully, readily and pleasantly, for then do they it from the heart, otherwise it is neither acceptable to God nor men; for though man do not see the heart, yet heart-unwillingness doth kyth [appear] in a backward and unpleasant carriage; "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily."

2. Servants should so go about their duty to men, as therein to look unto God more than man, by doing it because God commandeth it, and in the way wherein he doth command it, and in making conscience of their duty to man out of conscience to God, even when masters fail in theirs, 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19: and except servants eye God thus, they have but small encouragement otherwise to do their duty heartily; for he commandeth them to "do as unto the Lord, and not unto men," in order to make them do "heartily."

VER. 24. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

That he may excite servants to their duty, he useth some arguments, the first taken from that free retribution of the heavenly inheritance which Christ shall give unto those who serve him in their calling, and to believing servants among the rest.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is no calling so mean or base, which is lawful, and piously gone about, wherein a rich reward is not to be expected from God; even "servants shall receive the reward."

2. So poor is the reward which servants have to expect from their masters, and what is promised is often so slightly paid, that for their encouragement, they would cast their eye frequently upon the reward of this heavenly inheritance: for the apostle holdeth it out to be eyed by them, while he saith, "of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance."

3. In heaven there is no distinction of servants and sons: all are children and heirs who are there: even servants "shall receive the inheritance" of sons.

4. Whatever reward is promised to any work of ours, it proceedeth not from the worth which is in the work, but from God's free grace, who freely promiseth; "for it is the reward of an inheritance;" the word signifyeth an inheritance obtained by lot, wherein least of man is seen.

5. Promises have no influence to excite unto duty, except the truth of them be known and believed: divine truths are looked upon by many as fancies, hence there is so much preaching of them, and so little wrought by them: "Knowing that of the Lord."

6. As Christ will have none to serve him for nothing, so the meanest service that is, being done with the right qualifications, is service done to Christ; for so speaketh he here of servants; "ye serve the Lord Christ," and hereby assureth them of the reward.

VER. 25. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Here is a second argument taken from God's judgment to come, whether upon masters or servants who do wrong, confirmed from this, that God is no acceptor of persons.

DOCTRINES.

1. Hope of reward is not sufficient to draw men to their duty, except they be also driven to it by the fear of punishment; for so much is grounded upon those words, as they speak to servants, to whom the promise was but presently proposed; "But he that doeth wrong shall receive."

2. So just is God, that he will not pass by those wrongs which are least thought of by men; such are the mutual injuries of masters and servants; for he, whether master or servant, "that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong."

3. The Lord keepeth a proportion betwixt sins and strokes, so that the more wrong a man doth, the sorer shall his punishment be, Heb. x. 29; "for he shall receive his wrong," that is, a just retribution according to his wrong.

4. It is usual for people to conceit of somewhat in themselves, for respect to which they will not be so dealt with by God, as others, though they be alike guilty; some do thus conceit of their riches, some of their poverty, some of their parts. (See Doctrine 1, upon ver. 11.) For his vindicating God from having any such respect to persons, imports, that it is usual for men to have contrary thoughts of him.

5. There is no such respect of persons with God; he will spare none for outward respects as being free of all those base passions, which make men wrest judgment for respect to persons; he feareth not the great, he is not preposterously compassionate towards the poor, he coveteth not the gold of the rich, and hath no interest divided from that of eternity and justice, Gen. xviii. 25; so that with God there neither is nor can be "respect of persons."

CHAPTER IV.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle (having set down the duty of masters towards servants, ver. 1,) exhorteth those Colossians unto several duties, as to prayer, ver. 2, and to pray for himself in particular, ver. 3, 4, and to circumspect walking towards heathens, ver. 5, and to aim at delectable edification in their discourse, ver. 6.

In the second part he declareth why he sent Tychicus and Onesimus unto them, whom he highly commendeth, ver. 7—9.

In the third part are, first, salutations, whereof some were sent to the Colossians from three of the circumcision, who are described and commended, ver. 10, 11; some from their own minister Epaphras, whom he highly commendeth, ver. 12, 13; some from Luke and Demas, ver. 14, and the rest from Paul himself to the Laodiceans, ver. 15. And secondly, some directions unto them for use-making of this epistle, ver. 16, and that they would admonish their minister, ver. 17, and so he puts a close to the epistle, ver. 18.

VER. 1. Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

This verse seemeth to be a part of the preceding chapter, whether we look to the purpose which goeth before, or to that which doth follow; wherein he exhorts masters to give unto their servants that which they were obliged, whether by strict law and condition, or by the law of charity and Christian meekness; and that, because they had a Master in heaven, who would reckon with them if they did otherwise.

DOCTRINES.

1. Masters ought to give unto their servants that which is just, that is, what they are tied unto by the rule of strict justice; as first, food competent to their service and state, Prov. xxxi. 15; secondly, their hire, James v. 4; and thirdly, work, wherein they are not to press them rigorously, and above their power, Prov. xii. 10, nor yet suffer them to be altogether idle, Prov. xxix. 21: for, saith he, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just."

2. They are also bound to give unto them that which is equal, that is, what they are tied unto by the rule of charity and Christian meekness; as first, to see that they serve God, which is enjoined to masters in the fourth command; secondly, not to do all with them by boast and terror, as if they were beasts, but to draw them on with meekness, as being of the same nature with themselves, Eph. vi. 9; thirdly, not to be tyrannical, by making their will an absolute rule for them, but to hear them when in modesty they produce reason to the contrary, Job xxxi. 13, 14; fourthly, to have respect unto their infirmities, by caring for them when they are sick, Matt. viii. 6; yea, and fifthly, to let somewhat fall beyond condition unto those who are faithful, Prov. xiv. 35. "Give unto your servants that which is equal."

3. A right to heaven and the heavenly inheritance ought not to prejudice a man in what is due unto him of things worldly. A right unto the one doth not enervate, but rather establisheth their right unto the other; and so they may without offence seek and plead for what is due unto them: thus notwithstanding that heaven is promised (chap. iii. 24) to godly servants, yet masters are commanded to "give them that which is just and equal."

4. The greater that men are in the world, they stand in more need to have the terror of God presented unto them, that thereby they may be excited to their duty; for as he proposed a comfortable promise unto the poor servants, (chap. iii. 24,) so he boasteth masters with the consideration of God's greatness; "Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

5. Superiors and masters should so carry themselves, as remembering they have one above them to call them to an account; "Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

6. We would so represent God unto ourselves, as may serve best to restrain from sin, and put us upon our duty; for to enforce the exhortation, he proposeth God unto them as their "Master in heaven," which speaketh his absolute dominion, 2 Chron. xx. 6; his omniscience, Psa. xi. 4; his holiness, Isa. lviii. 15; and his omnipotency, Psa. cxv. 3. So that their sin could not be hid from him: his holy nature did hate it, he had both right and power to punish it: "Ye also have a Master in heaven."

VER. 2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

He exhorteth unto the exercise of prayer, and to some conditions required for the right discharging of this duty; as, first, instant and vehement persevering in it; secondly, watchfulness and fervency; thirdly, thankfulness.

DOCTRINES.

1. The exercise of prayer is necessary for the right performance of commanded duties, it being a mean in the use whereof covenanted strength and influence is conveyed unto us, Matt. vii. 7, without which we can do nothing; for unto the former exhortations he subjoineth, "Continue in prayer."

2. We ought to continue and persevere in this exercise, opposing all temptations mightily which tend to make us quit it: "Continue in prayer." The word signifieth to continue with strength, so as no labour or toil do make us weary, or give it over. Which continuance relateth, first, to the disposition of the heart, being still kept in a fitness to go about that duty when occasion offereth; and next to the actual exercise itself, that it be sometimes every day at least gone about, and always when there is opportunity, though we are not to quit all other duties, that we may be wholly, constantly, and only in this. (See 2 Sam. ix. 13.)

3. That this exercise of prayer be discharged aright, watchfulness is required, a watchfulness especially of the mind; and this, first, before we come to the duty, watching for an opportunity of

praying, searching out, and observing those things which may furnish matter for prayer, as God's mercies, and our own escapes. Secondly, in the duty, that we be intent upon it, our graces kept in exercise while we are at it, and what is God's dealing with the soul in it may be observed, as if he straiten, give liberty, hide his face, or show himself gracious. Thirdly, after the duty, as what answers we receive, and lest we be overtaken either with pride for doing well, or with discouragement for our coming short: "And watch in the same."

4. Thanksgiving for favours already received, ought to be joined with prayer, as a choice argument whereby to plead and prevail for new ones, (Psa. xliv. through the whole,) yea, though we should not prevail for the time, yet we owe thanks in that he hath been sometimes entreated, and is only delaying now, until a more fit time, wherein he may give that which is sought, Psa. xliii. 5. "Watch in the same with thanksgiving."

VER. 3. Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4. That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

He recommendeth one particular unto their prayers, to wit, that they would deal with God for him and other faithful ministers; that in that time of persecution chiefly, wherein he was made a prisoner for truth, they might be endued with a spirit of boldness and freedom in the delivery of their message, the subject whereof was most precious, as being a mystery, and a mystery of Christ, and so a most necessary and profitable mystery, ver. 3; and that he might be gifted with plainness in preaching, and with all other properties requisite in an able and faithful preacher, ver. 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christians are bound to pray for others as well as for themselves, and chiefly for their ministers, and for every one as they are less or more instrumental in the work of Christ: so Paul, who was much employed in the work of the gospel, enjoineth, "Withal, praying also for us."

2. Those only are fit to pray for others, who are making conscience to pray for themselves; for the apostle having exhorted them, ver. 2, to pray indefinitely, (which certainly containeth principally the duty of every man's praying for himself,) here subjoineth, "Withal," and "also praying for us."

3. Whatever a minister be for abilities and graces, it becometh him well to seek the help of God's people committed to his charge, for his further enabling to go about the duties of his calling, and especially he is to seek the help of their prayers, for even Paul seeketh this from those Colossians: "Withal praying also for us."

4. In times of persecution chiefly, a faithful minister will be more anxious and careful for the thriving of the gospel and work of God, than

for his own particular interest. If it go well with the gospel, come of him what will, he is well. So Paul (though lying in bonds) urgeth upon them to pray, not so much for his own liberty as the gospel's; not that the prison doors might be open, but "that God would open to them a door of utterance."

5. Holy boldness and freedom is much to be wished for in a minister, that so he may speak all seasonable truths, Acts xx. 27, and to all persons, 1 Tim. v. 20, 21, and at all times, 2 Tim. iv. 2, and may speak them as the truths of God with courage and authority, 1 Kings xxii. 14. This holy boldness and freedom is meant by the "door of utterance," as the apostle himself expoundeth it, Eph. vi. 19, 20: "That God would open unto us a door of utterance."

6. There are many difficulties to be overcome before a man can attain unto this holy boldness, and those such that only God can remove them. There is a difficulty to find out pertinent matter, and to vent it when it is found; partly through want of courage, partly through the suspending sometimes of Divine influence. And there is a difficulty to vent it rightly; that is, first, confidently, arising either from want of experience, or from an evil conscience. Secondly, pertinently, through want of prudence. Hence Paul, speaking of this holy boldness, useth the metaphor of a door, and of a door shut until God do open it: "That God would open unto us a door of utterance."

7. As Christ in his person, natures, and offices, and the gospel, which treateth of those, is a mystery; so Christ and the gospel should be the main subject of a minister's preaching. He ought so to preach the law, and press duties, as that the due relation betwixt Christ and those may be clearly held forth; Christ being the end of the law for righteousness, Rom. x. 4: "To speak the mystery of Christ."

8. Persecution for the gospel tendeth to the advantage of the gospel: the more it is suppressed, the more it groweth. Paul is "in bonds," and yet he preacheth, Acts xxvi. 29.

9. Then are people chiefly to bear burden with their ministers by praying to God for them, when they are under persecution for the gospel; for Paul mentioneth his bonds as an argument exciting them to pray: "For which I am also in bonds."

10. It is a great part of a minister's task, as to preach, so to make what he preacheth plain unto the people, by dimitting himself in the whole convey of his purpose, for method, 2 Tim. ii. 15, style, 1 Cor. ii. 4, and close application, 2 Tim. iv. 2, so far as is possible unto the capacity of the meanest: "That I may make it manifest," saith he.

11. Besides this holy boldness and plainness, there are many other things which a minister would advert to in preaching, as that he preach pertinently to the conditions of all, Isa. l. 4; that he speak affectionately and with pity, even to the most stubborn, Jer. iv. 19; and patiently, not wearying for want of success, 2 Tim. ii. 25; and zealously, with indignation against sin, Isa. lviii. 1; and frequently, 2 Tim. iv. 2; and self-denyingly; 2 Cor. iv. 5. These, and many other things

requisite, are all summed up by Paul in this comprehensive expression, "as I ought to speak."

VER. 5. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

He exhorteth them to wise and circumspect walking, with relation chiefly to the heathens among whom they did live, who were without the visible church; and that, in order to this, they should close with every opportunity of doing well, and particularly wherein they might gain any of those infidels to Christ, though with much loss to themselves in things worldly.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not sufficient for Christians to pray much, or go about the duties of God's immediate worship, except they also set about other particular duties of a holy life; so, besides prayer, he enjoineeth, "Walk in wisdom."

2. There is great wisdom required in a Christian's carriage towards those who are without, to wit, unconverted heathens without the church, and by proportion those who evidence their non-regeneration by a profane life within the church, Titus i. 16, lest we scare them from Christ, giving them occasion to speak evil of religion, 1 Tim. v. 14, or we ourselves be infected by them, 1 Cor. v. 6: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without."

3. The loss of credit, riches, ease, or not coming up to the full extent of our Christian liberty, and that which is our right in things worldly, is not to be stood upon, rather than we lose the opportunities of doing good, chiefly of gaining a godless man to Christ; for by the loss of these things, "we are to redeem the time," or opportunity. It is a metaphor from merchants, who prefer the least profit that may be, to their pleasures and ease, closely following their business when the markets are best.

VER. 6. Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

He directeth them how to order their speech and ordinary conference, so as it may always carry along with it delectable edification unto the hearers, being seasoned with the salt of holy and divine wisdom, whereby they should acquire ability and prudence to answer pertinently in any thing wherof they should be questioned, chiefly about the grounds of Christianity.

DOCTRINES.

1. We are not left to run at random in our ordinary discourses, so as to speak idly, Matt. xii. 36, much less profanely, Eph. iv. 29, but are at all times, and with all persons, to have an eye to the good of those with whom we speak, so as both to delight and edify them by our speech; for this is to speak "with grace:" (see Eph. iv. 29.) "Let your speech be alway with grace."

2. That our speech may be with grace, and so both delight and edify the hearers, the salt, not of bitter and satiric jesting, Eph. v. 4, but of divine wisdom, is required; that noisome, putrefying, and profane discourse may be eschewed, and what we speak may be so ordered upon an exact survey of time, place, and company, as it may prove most savoury and acceptable unto the hearers; for this is the use of salt, to extract putrefying humours from meats, and make them delicious to the taste, fit for digestion, and good for nourishment: "Seasoned with salt."

4. As Christians should endeavour that measure of knowledge, whereby they may be enabled to give a reason of their faith unto those who ask them; so it is not sufficient to answer materially to that wherein we are questioned, except we answer in the right manner also, that is, confidently, understandingly, reverently, and gravely, not jestingly; for he saith not "that ye may know with," but "how to answer."

5. The habituating of ourselves to edifying discourse in our ordinary strain, is a profitable mean for growth in knowledge, and the thorough understanding of those things which we know; for the fruit to be reaped by speaking "alway with grace," is "that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

VER. 7. All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:

8. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts:

9. With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

In the second part of the chapter, the apostle (having commended Tychicus from the esteem which he had of him, and from his ministerial calling,) sheweth, he had sent him to them, to give them certain information concerning his own case, and to return unto him certain information concerning theirs; and that he might prove comfortable unto them by his presence, preaching, and otherwise, ver. 7, 8. And joineth Onesimus with him in the commission, whom he also commendeth as a faithful Christian, beloved of Paul, and, as it would seem, their own countryman, ver. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. It concerneth a minister much to be of a good report among, and well esteemed of by people, that so the word may be the more readily received from him; for this cause Paul, being to send Tychicus to comfort their hearts, commends him much unto them, as a Christian, whom he himself loved dearly, "who is a beloved brother;" as a minister who was faithful for his Master, "a faithful minister;" as one whom Paul

had associated to himself sometimes as a colleague in the work of the ministry, Acts xx. 4; "And fellow-servant in the Lord."

2. It is good to be rightly informed of the state of those who are sufferers for Christ, that we may accordingly sympathise with them, Heb. xiii. 3, be preparing for the like sufferings, John xv. 20, and encouraged by their constancy, Phil. i. 14; for Paul sendeth Tychicus to inform them of his case.

3. The carriage of those who suffer for truth, ought to be such as they need not be ashamed who should know of it; Paul sendeth Tychicus "to declare all his state unto them."

4. Public and common reports, especially of things at a distance, are not much to be trusted; a man may easily wrong both himself and others, by being too credulous of such. Hence Paul sendeth Tychicus to inform them certainly of his case; "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you," and "whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose."

5. It concerneth a minister prudently to inquire and seek to know the state of those who are committ'd unto his charge, that he may be thereby directed how to speak to their state; for "he sendeth Tychicus to know their estate."

6. The carriage of people ought to be such, as they need not be ashamed that those who are over them in the Lord, come to the knowledge of it; for he sendeth Tychicus, "that he may know their estate."

7. A Christian sufferer for truth ought not to be so much taken up with his own particular concernment, as not to be affected with the trials and sufferings of others, though possibly they be much lighter than his own; so Paul, though now in bonds, sendeth Tychicus to strengthen and comfort those Colossians under their present trial from the false teachers; "And comfort your hearts."

8. As true grace will bring a man to esteem and credit, chiefly with those who themselves are gracious, and sometimes with others also, for it cutteth off those vices which make men contemptible, and adorneth with the contrary virtues; so where true grace is, it will make a man reckon interest in all those who have grace, and testify his affection unto them, whatever hath been their carriage formerly, and notwithstanding of any present disparity which may be among them otherwise; for here Onesimus, whom many take to be the same who is mentioned in the Epistle to Philemon, and so was once a fugitive servant, is now, being converted, intrusted with an honourable commission, and is owned by this eminent apostle as his beloved brother; "With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother."

9. Though grace in a person be the main thing which should commend him to us, yet other natural and civil relations ought to have their own deserved weight; grace doth not dissolve such bonds, but rather strengtheneth them; so Paul commendeth Onesimus unto them from this, that he "was one of them."

eth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

11. And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Here are salutations sent to the church at Colosse, by three of those who were in Paul's company, and they are described, first, severally from their respective names and other adjuncts; next jointly from their nation, they were Jews; from their pains in promoting the gospel; and from their usefulness to Paul himself.

DOCTRINES.

1. Distance of place should not cool those affections of love and good-will which ought to be among Christians; for those salutations were outward expressions of their inward love, and they do salute, though at a distance.

2. As little mercy is to be expected from persecutors, so the cross of Christ, and suffering for truth, is a thing not to be ashamed of; for Paul, as it were, glorieth in the style of "prisoner," though he was used as a captive slave: "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner." The word signifieth a captive of war.

3. As real friendship doth not expire with prosperity, so the sharpest sufferings of God's people have some sweet ingredient in them; for Paul hath a fellow with him while he is prisoner, even Aristarchus, who was his companion in travels, Acts xix. 2, and xx. 4, and now doth not quit him in his sufferings: "Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner."

4. Such love and respect should be had to those who are faithful instruments in the church of God, that even those who have relation to them, ought to be the more respected, chiefly if they walk in their steps; so Mark is commended from this, that he "was sister's son to Barnabas," who was separated for the work of God, Acts xiii. 8.

5. Notwithstanding a man hath fallen, to the grief and scandal of others, yet after evidences given of his amendment, he ought to be received and conversed with as formerly; so Mark, otherwise called John, did desert Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiii. 13, whereupon arose that hot contention betwixt those two apostles, Acts xv. 37; but now having given proof of his remorse for what he did, he is recommended by Paul to those Colossians; "Touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him."

6. As folk should not follow the multitude of the kind, from whom they are descended, in an evil course, so th's tendeth much to a man's commendation, when he breaks off his evil kind, and is not carried away with them; for those three were of the Jews, a people for the most part enemies to the gospel, Rom. xi. 28: "who are of the circumcision," which is mentioned for their commendation, that though they were Jews,

VER. 10. Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner salut-

yet they had become Christians, and companions of Paul under his affliction.

7. There is no way which leadeth to the kingdom of glory, but that which is held forth in the gospel, Acts iv. 12; and Christ doth rule in the world by the gospel, subduing thereby the hearts of men to live by his laws, Psa. cx. 3, written in the gospel, Rom. ii. 16, and exercising government and discipline in his visible courts, according to the rules prescribed by the gospel, Matt. xviii. 17, 18. Therefore the gospel in this place is called the kingdom of God, see Matt. iv. 23, Mark iv. 11. "Fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God."

8. This maketh much unto a man's commendation, when he hath any hand in the promoting of this kingdom, and especially when his discouragements are many, and encouragements are few, from the example of others who should join with him in that work, and do it not: for they are commended from this, that they only of the circumcision were Paul's "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God."

9. It appeareth hence how small ground there is for the pope's pretended supremacy and headship over the church; the main pillar whereof is, that because Peter was a bishop at Rome, therefore the pope must be his successor: now beside that they can never prove Peter to have been head of the church, it is certain that he was not at Rome, when Paul wrote this epistle, there being only there then those three of the circumcision, who were his fellow-labourers unto the kingdom of God: neither is there any word in Scripture to prove, that ever Peter was at Rome, but much to the contrary.

10. The most eminent servants of God in time of persecution, have need of comfort, encouragement, and up-stirring, so ready are the best to faint in the hour of temptation, Dan. xi. 35; but God in mercy doth not suffer them to be destitute of some, who are comfortable and encouraging unto them, when their necessity calleth for it: for saith he, "which have been a comfort to me:" the word signifieth they had been for comfort, counsel, or encouragement unto him; which supposeth that even Paul had need of those sometimes.

11. As most eminent Christians are ready to acknowledge with thankfulness, how steadable any are made unto them in their suffering case; so it is matter of no small commendation, to be in any measure helpful, by counsel, advice, encouragement, or comfort unto those who are suffering for Christ, and any part of his truth: for herein are those three commended, that they had "been a comfort unto Paul," as is acknowledged by himself.

VER. 12. Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Here are salutations directed from Epaphras, who is described from his country, his office of the ministry, and his affection to those Colossians,

testified by his fervent and constant praying to God for them, that they might be gifted with perseverance in universal, sincere, and hearty obedience to the will of God.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister ought not to omit any duty of civility, tending to keep a good understanding betwixt him and his flock: for Epaphras was their minister, (chap. i. 7,) "saluteth them."

2. The power of a call from God and his people, ought to make a man venture upon apparent inconveniences, which otherways he were obliged to eschew: for Epaphras, their own countryman, had embraced a call to the ministry among those Colossians; though Christ sheweth a minister is in hazard to meet with disrespect in his own country, John iv. 44. "Who is one of you?"

3. As it is the duty of a minister, not only to preach unto, pray with, but also to pray for his flock, and that always when opportunity offereth; so an honest minister, who maketh conscience of this duty in earnest, will find it no easy task, considering how indisposed he is sometimes to pray for himself, Matt. xxvi. 40; and how many in the flock pray not for themselves, Matt. xiii. 47, &c. and so are a heavy burden unto any who would pray for them; and how many they are also, concerning whom God will not be entreated, Matt. xxii. 14: thus "Epaphras was always labouring fervently for them in prayer." The word signifieth, to be striving in a battle, and in an agony for them.

4. A minister ought not to rest satisfied, that he himself preacheth truth plainly, or that the people committed to his charge attain thereby to the knowledge of truth; but practice and obedience to the will of God so known must be added, together with perseverance and constancy in their begun obedience, lest by their falling away, they lose themselves, and disgrace the truth: for he prayeth that they "might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

5. It is neither the pains of a minister, nor resolution of a people, Rom. ix. 16, but the power of God, which worketh constancy in the way of holiness, against the stormy blasts of several temptations: for Epaphras "prayeth unto God for it, that they may stand perfect and complete in the will of God."

6. Approved obedience to the will of God, and that which is to be aimed at, is that which is, 1, "perfect," to wit, with a perfection of parts, or sincere, and not hypocritical; "That ye may stand perfect." 2. Hearty and willing, the affections being, as it were, filled with, and carried on by the command; "and complete," or filled. It is a metaphor from sails filled with wind. 3. Universal, as having respect unto all the commandments; "In all the will of God."

VER. 13. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

He confirmeth by his own testimony, what he presently spoke concerning the zeal, or fervent

and burning care (for so the word signifieth) which Epaphras had of them and their neighbouring churches.

DOCTRINES.

1. Men in place and eminence, are bound to give a testimony to the graces and gifts of any whom they know to be deserving; that so the person of whom they testify, may be in better capacity to do good unto others, with whom such a testimony will have weight: for Paul giveth as it were a testimonial unto Epaphras, "I bear him record," &c.

2. It is a great part of a minister's commendation, that he be zealous or fervently careful for the spiritual good of his flock; so Paul "beareth record, that Epaphras had a great zeal for these Colossians," the people of his charge, chap. i. 7.

3. A minister's zeal ought to be extended towards others of Christ's members, than those of his proper charge, and chiefly unto those churches which lie nearest unto him, as being in a nearer capacity by their good or evil example, to advance or retard the work of God among his own flock: so Paul "beareth record, that Epaphras had a great zeal for those in Laodicea, and Hierapolis," which were neighbouring churches.

VER. 14. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

Here are some salutations sent from Luke and Demas.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Christ, when he is about to supply his church with a ministry, will take men of any calling, whom he pleaseth to choose, and make them ministers; so worldly advantage is not to be stood upon when Christ calleth: for Luke, the same, as it seemeth, who wrote the gospel, was before a physician, and had now become a minister; though his former calling would have advantaged him more, chiefly at those times when civil authority did allow no maintenance for ministers; "Luke, the beloved physician."

2. Men in place chiefly, should lay out their love and respect so wisely, that it may tend to a man's commendation to be respected by them as being known to lay out their affection upon none but such as are worthy of it; so Paul calleth Luke, "beloved," to wit, by him, that hereby he may commend him to them; "Luke, the beloved physician."

3. There are many fair professors within the visible church, who may afterwards turn apostates, who so long as they keep the mask of a profession, will not be belied with the best in external duties, yea, and often do outstrip others: for this Demas (whom many take to be the same who is spoken of, 2 Tim. iv. 10, to have turned apostate, and as some write, an idolatrous priest) is here among the first in saluting those Colossians: "And Demas, greet you."

4. Though judicious ministers may have their own fears concerning such forementioned pro-

fessors; yet so long as they continue in the external duties of Christianity, they ought to give unto them that outward respect which is given unto others: but withal ministers would be sparing to engage much in the commendation of any, whom they have ground to suspect will prove such, until time try what they are: for Paul writeth the salutation of Demas among the rest, though it is like he had his own fears concerning him; for he commendeth him not as he did the rest; "And Demas, greet you."

VER. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

The apostle directs them to salute, in his name, the Christians at Laodicea, that so they might be prepared to hear this epistle with greater attention: and above all the rest he saluteth one Nymphas, (a man eminent for piety,) and the church at his house; whereby may be meant both a congregation of Christians, to whom he had given his house for a place of public assembling to divine worship; as also his own family, who were piously instructed, and orderly governed, as if they had been a church.

DOCTRINES.

1. People are not so to make use of the respect and affection which a public minister carrieth unto them, as to make others equally deserving, jealous of him, as if he did carry no such respect unto them: for the apostle employeth those Colossians, "to salute" in his name "the brethren which were in Laodicea," as if he had said, let them know, I carry the same respect unto them, which I carry unto you.

2. However a minister be tied to respect all the members of the church, and to evidence so much, by discharging all common duties towards them, yet he is bound to put some more respect upon those who are more eminent for piety among them; that so by his countenancing the appearances of piety, he may make it the more desirable and lovely: for Paul "saluteth Nymphas" in particular.

3. As the primitive church had not the countenance of civil authority to provide, upon the public expense, places for the congregation to meet, and public maintenance for ministers; so such was the fervour of love to the gospel then, that private Christians did contribute largely and freely for the upholding of it: Charity did move to give more then, than force of law can now: for Nymphas gives his house to be a public place of meeting for the church: "And the church at his house."

4. Masters of families should so train up their household, in the exercise of divine worship, and in a godly conversation, by instructing the ignorant, 1 Cor. xiv. 35, rebuking and censuring the disobedient and profane, Psal. ci. 7, and by discharging all duties of worship, competent to the master of a family, and causing his family to join with him, Josh. xxiv. 15, that they may deserve the name of a church: so much is imported

by those words, "the church at his house," as they contain a designation of his family.

VER. 16. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

He directeth them, that after they have read this epistle themselves, they would cause it to be read in the church of the Laodiceans, who being their neighbours, were infested with the same errors; and that some other epistle written from Laodicea, either from the whole church or from their ministers, as it seemeth unto Paul, informing him of their case, should be read by the Colossians, for better clearing of some passages in this epistle.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Scripture is to be read and perused even by private Christians, so the doctrine contained in Scripture, even that which is expressly directed to some particular churches or persons, is of universal use unto all others: thus they are commanded, having read this epistle themselves, to cause read it in the church of Laodicea, as being useful for them also.

2. The helps of other men's writings may, and should, be made use of for the better understanding of Scripture: for this epistle from Laodicea was not written by Paul himself, who had never been there, chap. ii. 1, but by the Laodiceans themselves: and Paul will have it read for the further clearing of this epistle, which was written by himself: "And that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."

VER. 17. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

He directeth them to admonish their minister Archippus (who in the absence of his colleague Epaphras had the more burden, and it seemeth had fallen somewhat slack) both to consider the nature and weight of the ministerial charge with which he was intrusted by Christ, and that he would faithfully discharge all the parts of it.

DOCTRINES.

1. There is no ground from this Scripture, for placing a power of jurisdiction in people over their ministers, to call them to a judicial account, and to inflict the censures of the church upon them: for all that is here said, inferreth no more than an admonition from charity, which any private Christian might have given to their minister, and not an authoritative censure or rebuke: Paul speaketh otherways, when he would establish any power of that kind; as 1 Tim. vi. 17; "Charge them that are rich," &c., but here, only "say unto Archippus."

2. As the best of ministers are ready to fall slack in their duty, and have need of up-stirring, they have so much to do, 2 Cor. ii. 16, and for

the most part see so small fruits of what they do, Isa. xlix. 4; so it is the duty of people to have an eye upon their minister, how he discharge his office, and when they see a fault in him, to tell himself of it, admonishing him for it: but withal, they would do this in love, and so, as they may evidence all due respect both to his person and function: for he directeth them to "say unto Archippus, take heed to thy ministry," and not backbite or rail upon Archippus.

3. That a man may conscientiously go about his calling, he would know the nature of such a charge, and what it requireth: particularly a minister would know; first, that his calling is a "ministry," a laborious service, or a working, as it were, through dust and mire: for so the word signifieth. And secondly, that however the designation of the person unto the ministry be from man, Acts vi. 3, and xiv. 23, yet the office itself is from Jesus Christ, to whom he must be accountable for his carriage in it: for, saith he, "say unto Archippus, take heed to thy ministry, which thou hast received in the Lord."

4. It is not sufficient for any man, chiefly for a minister, to know the nature of his calling and what it doth require, unless also he make conscience to discharge it when it is known, and to discharge all the parts of it, that so he may fulfil it; "That thou fulfil it:" so were they to say to Archippus.

VER. 18. The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

This verse containeth the conclusion of the epistle, which he sheweth was written with his own hand, and not by a secretary, as the rest of the epistle was: and in it, having saluted them, he craveth they would remember his bonds, and wisheth unto them God's grace and favour, with all spiritual benefits flowing from it.

DOCTRINES.

1. Satan's malice and man's impudence, did come to that height, even while the apostles themselves were alive, as to endeavour the corrupting of Scripture, by calling that Scripture which was not: for to prevent such impostures, Paul writeth the salutation with his own hand, that the epistle may be known to be his, 2 Thess. iii. 17. "The salutation by the hand of me Paul."

2. God hath sufficiently provided in his word against the forementioned evil, by putting such marks upon Scripture, as may be a clear difference betwixt it and all human writings; Paul's own hand-writing did serve for such a mark in his epistles; "The salutation by the hand of me Paul:" and though this mark doth not extend unto all Scripture, neither can it give faith now, the first copy of his epistles being lost; yet there are other marks or arguments taken from Scripture, whereby it doth sufficiently evidence itself to be the word of God, as the consent of all its parts, though written at diverse times and by several hands; the fulfilling of its

prophecies, the majesty and simplicity of the style, the power of its doctrine, &c.

3. As the most eminent servants of Christ may be put to personal sufferings for truth ; so it is the duty of all Christians to remember them under their sufferings, so as to pray to God for them, ver. 2, 3, to see the worth of truth, for which they suffer in their resolute undergoing of the cross, and suffering for it, Acts xxi. 13, so as to fore-arm themselves for the like sufferings, John xv. 20, and to supply them also in their outward necessities, Phil. iv. 14. In order

to all those, it seemeth, Paul had desired them to "remember his bonds."

4. Though Christians may use an ordinary form of words in saluting of, and expressing their best wishes unto those with whom they converse ; yet they ought to be real, and not formal only in using of it, as understanding what they wish, and being affectionate and sincere in their wish : for Paul doth affix his amen unto his ordinary farewell wish : " Grace be with you. Amen."

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,

WHEN the design of giving the sense and use of the Scriptures so briefly as might be, was set on foot by some who looked upon it as very useful for the present and succeeding generations, the reverend author of this piece was prevailed with to take a share in that undertaking; from whom much service of that kind, considering his abilities and indefatigableness in his studies, might have been expected, if, as himself elsewhere intimateth, his papers upon some books of Scripture had not been destroyed by a sad accident, in the times of our calamity and trouble. Notwithstanding which discouragement, he fell to work again, and did go through the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, his expositions upon which were published in his own life-time; and left this Exposition upon both the Epistles to the Thessalonians ready to be transcribed for the press, some time before his death.

I shall not here insist to give any full character of this reverend person, who, having served his own generation by the will of God, is now fallen asleep and doth rest from his labours, and who being dead, yet speaketh, by the savoury effects of his faith, love, and patience, expressed in his personal walk and ministerial administrations, besides what his public writings do declare concerning him. His piety, learning, prudence, and moderation, and that in very contentious and distracting times, were not only well known and much esteemed in the congregation where he served, and the province wherein he lived, but did render him very famous throughout this national church. Such as conversed with him in ordinary, and were acquainted with his studies, did discern more of his spirit and abilities than himself was willing to make show of; and were convinced that (beside his abilities for explicating and applying of the Scriptures in this more plain and compendious way, and for enlarging and pressing of Scripture truths, with solidity

and seriousness in his ordinary preaching) he was a man of a deep reach, and well fitted for giving of advice in perplexed and intricate cases, whereof not a few did occur in his time; and, withal, well furnished for discussing of controversies, and stopping of the mouths of gainsayers; whereof he gave an ample proof, when, in public preaching, he did solidly and perspicuously examine and refute these errors which of late did infest this church and island. But (forbearing to write eulogies of him whose true worth did set him far above the commendation of such a one as I am) all that I need to say at this time is, that, as I doubt not, thy acquaintance with what of his is already published, will sufficiently commend unto thee what further of that kind hath flowed from his pen; so I dare assure thee, upon unquestionable evidence, that this piece is genuine, and the work of Mr. Fergusson: the copy made use of at the press being transcribed from the original written with his own hand, and revised by two of his brethren in these parts; from one of whom I received it, that I might also read it over before it went to the press. And though I be otherwise crowded with abundance of work in my present service, yet I have taken some time to peruse it, to my own very great satisfaction.

It remains therefore, Christian Reader, that thou study how to improve this advantage, which, among others, is, by the good providence of God, put into thy hand; lest in a time wherein many means of knowledge do abound, the increase of ignorance, atheism, and popery prove a sad plague and snare, and the abuse of light provoke God to send darkness wherein no man can walk. From which that thou may be delivered, is the prayer of

Thy servant

In the work of the Gospel,

GEORGE HUTCHESON.

THE

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

EXPOSITION

OF

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.



PAUL having planted a church at Thessalonica, the chief city of all Macedonia, Acts xvii. 1, &c., he was driven from thence as far as Athens, by the violence of the unbelieving Jews, Acts xvii. 5—15. And having heard what sad things this church did suffer

from those unbelieving Jews, and also from Pagans, chap. ii. 15, he sent Timotheus to them to establish and comfort them, chap. iii. 2, upon whose return, together with the glad tidings brought by him of their constancy in the doctrine of Christ, Paul doth write this Epistle unto them, chap. iii. 6, 7. His scope wherein is, partly, by a relation of their conversion to and constancy in the faith of his own ministerial carriage when he was among them, and of the solicitous care he yet had of them, notwithstanding of his absence from them, to engage them yet further to constancy and perseverance in the doctrine received for the time to come; which he laboureth to effectuate in the first principal part of this Epistle, chap. i. 2, 3. And partly to incite them unto several duties of a holy life, which he doth endeavour in the second part of this Epistle, chap. iv. and to ver. 23 of chap. v., having at the close of chap. iv., from ver. 14, occasionally intermixed a doctrinal truth, concerning the state of believers after death, and Christ's coming to judgment. And lastly, he concludes the Epistle by praying for them, and commending some things unto their care, from ver. 23 of chap. v. to the end.

CHAPTER I.

THE first part of this chapter contains the inscription of the Epistle, ver. 1. In the second part he propounds and prosecutes a strong motive to perseverance and constancy, to wit, the esteem he had of their gracious receipts from God, to

ver. 8, and the general fame thereof in all the churches, to the end. And more particularly he doth first make entry to this purpose, by giving thanks to God for them, ver. 2. And next, he prosecutes it by giving reasons for his thanksgiving: 1. The cardinal graces of faith, love, and hope, which he observed in them, ver. 3. 2. The knowledge he had of their election, ver. 4. 3. That the gospel was preached by him and his associates, in life and power among them, ver. 5. 4. The excellent fruits of the gospel preached, in making them conform to Christ and his servants, ver. 6, which he amplifieth; first, from this, that they became ensamples for imitation unto their nearest neighbours, ver. 7, 8. Next, from the general report and fame of their graces, which had spread itself far and near, ver. 8, which he maketh appear from this, that foreign churches did give him an account, both how God did countenance his ministry among them, ver. 9, and of the saving fruits thereof towards them, to wit, the work of their conversion, and the sincerity of that work, evidencing itself in a twofold fruit of their conversion, 1. Their doing service to God, ver. 9. 2. Their hopeful expectation of Christ's second coming, ver. 10.

VER. 1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

In this verse is the inscription, declaring, first, who was the immediate penman of the Holy Ghost in writing this Epistle, to wit, Paul; together with the joint asserters and approvers of the truth contained in it, to wit, two of his associates in the work of the ministry, while he was at Thessalonica; Silvanus, the same as it seemeth with Silas, Acts xvii. 4, and Timotheus, an Evangelist, 2 Tim. iv. 5, and of great reputation in this church, chap. iii. 2, 6. Secondly, to whom the Epistle was directed, who are described from their spiritual state; they were a church called from the world and idols, to serve the true

and living God, ver. 9, from the place of their habitation at Thessalonica, and their relation "to God the Father," and to Christ the Son; in whom they are said to be, because of their worshipping of and union with God in Christ, whereby the true church is distinguished from heathens and Jews; an union, I say, either external in all visible church members, or internal also in real believers. (See upon Phil. i. 1. Doct. 6.) Thirdly, the apostle's usual salutation or comprecation, whereby he prayeth for "grace" and "peace" unto them. See these words explained upon the former epistle.

Beside what hath been observed already upon the inscriptions of the former epistles, learn, 1, it is the duty of Christ's ministers, not only to endeavour seriously that a people turn from idols to God, and that a church of Christ be set up among them; but also to take notice how the work of God doth afterwards thrive with them, what obstructions are in the way of their progress, and how they may be useful for removing these obstructions, and promoting the work of grace among them, and to lay out themselves to the utmost accordingly, and this whether they be present with them, or absent from them; for Paul having, by the help of Silvanus and Timotheus, planted a church among the Thessalonians, did perform the pre-named duties afterwards, even when he was absent from them, as appears by the inscription of this epistle. "Paul, unto the church of the Thessalonians."

A minister of Christ is not always, or ordinarily, to inculcate his own ministerial dignity and authority upon the people, except when it is evident that his so doing may contribute to advance his Master's work, lest otherwise his hearers judge him a man vain-glorious and arrogant, as seeming to be much delighted in reiterating that often, which tends to set forth his own praise, 2 Cor. iii. 1; for because (as it seemeth) this church did not question Paul's apostolical authority, therefore he doth not assert it, nor design himself by it as he doth to other churches: "Paul, unto the church," &c.

3. The Spirit of the Lord in Christ's ministers makes them of such an humble condescending temper, in order to their gaining ground upon the Lord's people, as they will not stand to stoop somewhat below what they are, and to make use of all lawful means and helps which may serve to procure respect unto their message among the people, even of such as are below themselves, and whereof they have no need except in order to that end; for though Paul's apostolic authority was sufficient in itself to commend the following truths unto the church of God, Gal. v. 2; yet because his two associates had great weight among the Thessalonians, he doth join them to himself, though far inferior to himself, that by all means he might procure the more respect unto his doctrine: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church."

4. It is but small advantage unto a people or society that they bear the name of a church, except they have the marks and characters of a true church, whereof this is one, that they worship the unity of the Godhead in plurality of persons, and acknowledge Jesus Christ the second

person in his mediatory office, and that by our union with him we come to be one with the Father; for all this is implied, while they are said to be in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ; whereby he doth distinguish them from all false churches, whether of Pagans, who are not in God but in idols; or of Jews, who worship not a Trinity, nor God in Christ; "Which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ."

5. Even those who have obtained grace and favour from God, have yet need of more grace for preserving them in that state of grace wherein they are, Rom. xiv. 4; for increasing the sense and manifestation of it, Psa. li. 8—12: for pardoning and subduing these evils, which otherwise might provoke the Lord to withdraw it, 1 John ii. 1; and for enabling them to grow in the graces of his Spirit, that they may in some measure walk suitable to his grace and favour, John xv. 28; for Paul wisheth for grace even to these Thessalonians, a great part of whom were in a state of grace and favour already; "Grace be unto you."

6. The Lord's ministers, in the entrance of their labours towards a people, would endeavour to have their own hearts really affected with enlarged desires after the people's good, both spiritual and temporal; that all their pains taken among them flowing from this fountain, and not from base, carnal, and selfish motives, 1 Pet. v. 2, may be the more acceptable to God, 1 Pet. v. 4, pleasant and easy to themselves, as flowing from an inward principle, 2 Cor. xii. 15; more blessed of God for gaining ground upon the people, (chap. ii. ver. 7, 8, with 13,) and the more heartily entertained and accepted of by them, especially when these enlarged desires of ministers towards their good are made known unto them, Gal. iv. 13—15; for therefore doth our apostle not only labour to get his heart so affected, but ordinarily in the entry of his epistles maketh so much known unto those to whom he writes: "Grace be unto you, and peace," &c.

VER. 2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

The apostle's scope being to excite those Thessalonians unto constancy in the faith and doctrine of the Gospel, he doth for this end make known the good esteem which he and his associates had of them, in so far as they did always, that is, in all their immediate addresses to God, make conscience; first, of thanksgiving to God for them all, to wit, because of the graces of God's Spirit after mentioned, which they in charity, and from some speaking evidences, as it seems, did judge (for what they knew) were bestowed upon them all. Secondly, of praying to God on their behalf, to wit, for constancy and growth in the knowledge of the gospel, and practice of true piety: so chap. iii. 12, 13.

Hence learn, 1, A begun work of grace in us is then improved aright, when we do not draw an argument fostering laziness and sloth from it; but are thereby incited to hold fast what is already received, and to seek after more: for Paul's scope is to incite them unto constancy,

and further progress by making them know what thoughts he had of God's grace already in them, in this and the following verses; "We give thanks," &c.

2. We should endeavour so to speak unto others of these saving graces which are in them, as thereby they be not puffed up with conceit; but made in all their richest receipts to see matter of humiliation in themselves, and of thanksgiving unto God: for therefore Paul being to let them know how much he esteemed of their graces, maketh entry to his purpose, not by setting forth their praises, but "by giving thanks to God" on their behalf, teaching them to do the like.

3. It is the duty of the Lord's people, in their immediate addresses to God, to present the case one of another before the Lord, and to be suitably affected with it, both with their enjoyments to thank the Lord for them, and with their wants to pray to God that he would supply them; and especially a minister ought to be affected thus to the people of his charge, for so was Paul and his associates: "We give thanks, making mention of you in our prayers."

4. Then do we discharge this duty which we owe one to another faithfully, when we do it constantly, and always when occasion is offered to approach unto God for ourselves, otherwise our seldom discharging of this duty doth speak it is not minded seriously or affectionately; for Paul gives thanks to God "always" for them.

5. Concerning the extent of Paul's charity towards them all, so as to take matter of thanksgiving to God from all and every one of them, see upon Phil. i. 7, Doct. 3.

6. As the duties of prayer and praise go well together, and do mutually contribute for the help one of another, so we would make such a discovery unto others of the good that is in them, to make them thankful, and set them upon the duty of praise, as to make them also know there is much good yet wanting to keep them humble and to set them upon the duty of prayer; for Paul doth both these, while he sheweth them he not only giveth thanks for the good they already had, but also prayeth for that which was yet lacking: "Making mention of you in our prayers."

VER. 3. Remembering, without ceasing, your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

The apostle prosecutes the forementioned scope, by giving reasons of his often thanksgiving to God for them: and, first, in this verse he sheweth that those graces which he, with his associates saw kything [appear] in them, had left such an impression upon them, that they could not but without ceasing, or whenever occasion offered, make mention of them both to God and men: of which graces he reckoneth three, in the exercise whereof all religion doth consist, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. First, faith, whereby we assent in our understandings to the truth of all God's word, Acts xxiv. 14, because of his authority who

hath revealed it, John iv. 24, and are acted in our will and affections suitable to what those truths do hold out, Heb. xi. 13; but do especially rest on Christ for salvation, that good thing offered in the promise, Acts xvi. 31. Secondly, love, whereby we wish well to, Psa. xl. 16, Matt. v. 44, and desire to be one with, 2 Cor. v. 8, Gal. v. 12, with 15, and do acquiesce and rest satisfied with what goodness and perfection we find in, Psa. xviii. 1, 2, Prov. xvi. 13, both God and man, (especially his saints,) each in their own order, Matt. xxii. 37—39. Thirdly, hope, whereby we do firmly expect, Rom. viii. 25, Phil. i. 20, those good things which God hath promised, and are not yet performed, Rom. viii. 24. Next, he amplifies, first, each of those graces from their effects: to faith he ascribeth a work, not only because it is the work of God's Spirit in us, Col. ii. 12, but also because it actually worketh by love, Gal. v. 16; purifieth the heart, Acts xv. 9, and is an active principle of all good offices which we perform towards God or man, Rom. xiv. 23, Heb. xi. 6. To love, he ascribeth labour. The word signifieth such labour as wasteth and wearie the spirit, 2 Cor. xi. 27, whereby he intimateth their unwearied industry, wrestling through much discouragement and difficulty, for the furthering the good of God's church and distressed members thereof. And to hope he ascribeth patience, it being hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, or a well-grounded expectation of eternal life wrought by Christ, and relying on Christ, which makes the person who hath it christianly patient, and courageously resolute to endure all hardships he can meet with, until the good thing promised be at last performed, 2 Cor. iv. 16 with 18. Secondly, he doth amplify them all jointly, by their sincerity and soundness implied in this, that they were studious of those virtues as in the sight of God, see Gen. xvii. 1; and by the great encouragement they had to that study, from their common and joint interest in God as their "Father."

DOCTRINES.

1. It is a Christian duty incumbent to all, and especially to ministers, through virtue of their office, to be much taken and affected with the good we perceive in others, so as length of time, distance of place, or multiplicity of other business, make us not forget it; and that while we remember it, we do not suppress it, or the deserved commendation of those in whom it is, that so we may thereby prevail both with ourselves and others to follow and imitate it, Rom. xi. 14, and especially to bless the Lord for it: for Paul, though now at a distance, and much involved in other affairs, both of his own and of public concernment, doth yet a long time after, always when occasion offered, call to mind and commemorate the graces of God bestowed upon these Thessalonians, as a ground of thanksgiving to God, both by himself and others: "Remembering without ceasing."

2. Then do we rightly remember the graces of God, parts and abilities of others, when the remembrance of them doth not produce discouragement, carnal emulation, and envy in ourselves, Numb. xi. 29, or flattering applause unto

those who hate them, Prov. xxiv. 5, but matter of thankfulness to God who gave them: for as appears from the connexion, Paul's remembrance of their graces produceth this effect in him: "We give thanks, remembering without ceasing."

3. A real believer may look upon the gracious receipts of others, as matter of his thanksgiving unto God, in so far as their receipts do not only commend the giver, Eph. i. 3, but are profitable unto us as a copy to imitate, (see ver. 7;) as a ground of encouragement, to expect the like from God to ourselves, 1 Tim. i. 16, and several other ways: for Paul gives thanks to God for their receipts: "Remembering without ceasing."

4. The life of a Christian is not a life of idleness, not a life of ease, nor yet a life outwardly prosperous and free from the cross; his faith must have work, his love must have labour, and his hope must be attended with patience under the cross. See more in the Exposition.

5. As inward grace in the heart, where it is lively, cannot be hid, but must of necessity kyth [appear] in its effects and fruits without; so it is not grace in the naked habit, but grace in exercise, which can yield comfort or encouragement unto the man himself, or matter of thankfulness unto God from others: for it was the "work of faith, the labour of love, and patience of hope," for which Paul giveth thanks to God, and from which he doth both encourage and incite them to constancy.

6. Though only God and a man's own conscience can pass a certain and infallible judgment upon his inward sincerity of heart in the exercise of Christian virtues, Rom. xiv. 4, yet so much of a man's sincerity may kyth [appear] to gracious discerners in his outward conversation and carriage, as will afford sufficient ground to pass a charitable judgment upon him, as one who discharge his duty sincerely, and in the sight of God: for though Paul knew not their hearts, yet he doth charitably judge they were sincere in what they did, while he saith, "your work of faith and labour of love, in the sight of God."

7. Then may we charitably judge that a man's external actions are done in sincerity, and flow from an inward root of grace in the heart, when, for any thing appeareth, he doth labour to make conscience of all those external duties wherein the exercise of any Christian grace doth consist, and neglecteth none when God doth call him to it: for Paul, from their performing not only the work of faith, but also the labour of love and the patience of hope, doth judge in charity they had the inward habits of those graces, and did what they did sincerely, and in the sight of God.

8. The believer's laying claim unto, and maintaining of an interest in God as his by covenant, gives much enlargement of heart unto him to exercise his graces, and to carry himself sincerely, and as in God's sight, in all his actions. It is our distance from God, our way-giving unto misbelief, first to question and then to deny an interest in God as ours, which mar the exercise of grace, "the word of faith," &c., and in progress of time doth make us not only do less, but also more unsound and less straight in what we do: for he maketh their "work of faith, in the sight of God," to be accompanied with and carried

on by this, that God was looked upon as their Father: "In the sight of God and our Father."

VER. 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

Here is a second reason of their thanksgiving to God, which he doth usher in by two sweet styles he giveth unto them; to wit, of "brethren" to him, and "beloved of God," as the words may well be read: see 2 Thess. ii. 13. And the reason is, the knowledge which Paul, with his associates, had of their "election" to grace and glory from all eternity by God, as election is taken, Eph. i. 4, (where see in the Exposition, and Doct. 1, 2, 3,) and it seemeth election must be taken in that sense here, as appears from a parallel place, 2 Thess. ii. 13, and not for their effectual calling, though the word be so taken elsewhere, John xv. 19. Now Paul is said to know their election, if we mean the election of this or that man in particular, not according to an infallible judgment of certainty, for so none without special revelation can know the election of others, no more than he can infallibly know the secret motions of their heart, which alone do infallibly discriminate the hypocrite from the man who is truly regenerate, 1 John iii. 14, and consequently are the only infallible evidences of a man's election; and therefore he knew their election according to that judgment which is overruled with charity, and grounded upon such evidences as are most probable, though not infallible; such are the external acts of piety, further than which no man can infallibly see into another, seeing only God searcheth the heart, Rev. ii. 23. Although, if we conceive, as it safely may be conceived, that the apostle doth mean here of the election not of this or that man in particular, but of the whole church indefinitely and in common: then the knowledge he had of their election was most infallible and certain; to wit, that not only he knew nothing, as it seemeth, in the contrary to the election of any of them in particular, and had positive probable evidences that many of them were elected, but also, though he could not take upon him infallibly to condescend upon particular persons, yet he did know assuredly that some among them were elected, seeing God sendeth his word in power (as he had sent it to those Thessalonians, ver. 5) unto no people, no not to the worst, but where some do appertain to his election of grace, Isa. vi. 13, with 9, and from those some, being the better part, Paul (as usually elsewhere, Rom. i. 7) doth denominate the whole.

DOCTRINES.

1. The work of saving grace in the heart, manifesting itself in a man's external actions, is an undoubted mark of his eternal election; so that according to the evidence, whether infallible or conjectural only, that we have of the former, we may and ought to be the more or less persuaded of the latter. Thus Paul, because he had promising evidences that those saving graces of faith, love, and hope were in them, ver. 3, he doth in this verse, from charity, judge that they were elected: "Knowing your election."

2. Then is the faith and knowledge of our elec-

tion solid, and of the right stamp, when it doth not make us secure, lazy, or to loose the reins to profanity and vice, but stirs us up to greater diligence in keeping the ground we have already gained, and in advancing forward for gaining more: for the apostle's scope in the telling them of their election, is thereby to excite them unto constancy in the doctrine received.

3. The faith and knowledge of our election, and that God hath singled us out from others to bestow upon us eternal life, may sweeten the saddest of outward dispensations, and make us raise a song of praise to God for that, at least, whatever be his dealing with us otherways: for though these people did labour under sad afflictions, chap. ii. 14; yet Paul doth look upon their election as a ground of thanksgiving to God from him, and much more from themselves: "We give thanks," ver. 3, "knowing your election."

4. A gracious heart doth judge it a piece of his highest credit to reckon spiritual kindred unto all who are born of God, and will love them dearly, and carry himself affectionately and affably towards such as are beloved by him: for because they were "beloved" by God, they were "brethren" to him, the latter compellation containing in it the cause of the former.

VER. 5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

—Followeth a third reason of their thanksgiving to God, which serveth also for an evidence that there was an elect people among them: which reason is first propounded, to wit, the lively manner after which he and his associates had preached the gospel among them; called "their gospel," because they were intrusted to preach it, 2 Cor. v. 19; and the manner of their preaching is set down, first, negatively; it was "not in words only," that is, as he explains himself, 1 Cor. ii. 4, "not with the enticing words of men's wisdom," or varnished over with some fair, sophistical flourishes of eloquent language, tending more to amuse the hearers, tickle the ears, and commend the preacher, than to edify the judgment, to work upon the affection, and to commend Christ to people's hearts. Next, positively; it was, 1. in power; that is, accompanied with such boldness, liberty, gospel simplicity, plainness of language, seriousness, and fervent edge of affection in the preachers, as did render the word so spoken, in some measure, apt to work powerfully upon the hearers: for so doth Paul himself seem to explain what is meant by preaching in power, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 13, and iv. 19, 20. 2. Their preaching was in the Holy Ghost; that is, it was confirmed by signs and miracles wrought among them by the apostle and his associates, as they were extraordinarily assisted thereto by the Holy Ghost: see the Holy Ghost so taken, Acts xix. 2, 3. It was "in much assurance;" whereby is meant, that full persuasion above all doubt which was in Paul and the other preachers, of the truth of what they preached; so that they spoke not of

these truths doubtingly, but confidently, and as of things which they had heard and seen, 1 John i. 1. Now that all these three expressions do set forth somewhat in the preachers, according to the sense given, rather than the effect of their preaching upon the hearers, spoken of ver. 6, appears from the last clause of this verse, where he appeals to the consciences of the Thessalonians, if they, the preachers, had not in all things carried themselves among them answerable to what he presently spoke; and withal sheweth that all that they did of that sort, and that God did by them, was for their sake and good, which doth make the present purpose subservient to the apostle's scope, to wit, that therefore, even upon the account presently mentioned, there was ground of thanksgiving to God for them, and that they were bound to persevere in that doctrine which God had made to be preached among them in such a lively manner for their good.

Hence learn, 1. That God hath sent the gospel in life and power unto a people, and given them a lively and powerful ministry, though but for a season, to sow the seeds of grace and saving knowledge among them. It is no small matter of thanksgiving unto God, both from themselves and others on their behalf, even though their faithful pastors afterwards should by force of persecution be for a time removed from them: the good and fruit of such a ministry is not always removed with them, but lasteth after they are gone, John iv. 37, 38; for Paul doth thank the Lord upon behalf of this church, that he and his associates had preached the gospel in life and power among them, though they were for the present driven from them: "We give thanks," &c., ver. 2, "for our gospel came unto you in power."

2. The Lord's usual way is not to send a lively and powerful ministry unto a place, but where he hath some of his elect to be converted and saved by that means: for Paul having affirmed, ver. 4, that he knew there was an elect people among them, he giveth this as one evidence upon which that knowledge was grounded, even because God had sent such a ministry unto them; "For our gospel came unto you in power."

3. That a people, or person, may prove constant in faith and piety, they would often remember the love of their first espousals to Christ, with what fervency and seriousness he did bear himself in upon them, how sweet, how lively, how ravishing the glad tidings and report of him in the mouth of his servants were once unto them; and how much they were then convinced of a beauty in truth, and in the feet and carriage of those who did carry the message of truth and peace unto them; the remembrance whereof may stir up some longing desires to find that in Christ, in truth, and in a sent ministry, which once they found, at least may render them ashamed to make defection from them: for the apostle's remote scope, as we show, in calling them to mind of the lively manner wherein the word was first preached among them, and how they themselves were witnesses to it, and convinced of it, is hereby to excite them unto constancy and perseverance: "For our gospel came unto you in power."

4. As there doth usually but little fruit accompany a ministry when ministers do study words more than purpose, and to busle [set forth] their purpose in such a dross of words as may set out themselves rather than commend Christ, and tickle the ear rather than edify the hearer : so where a minister doth make it his study to get Christ formed in, and ground gained upon the hearts of hearers, and to fall upon such purpose, such words, and such strains of utterance, and delivery of his purpose from affection, plainness, and holy boldness, as may conduce most for that end ; the pains of such a ministry are usually seconded most by the Holy Ghost, and does afford much matter of thanksgiving to the Lord ; for by the former the gospel cometh in word only, and by the latter it cometh in power also ; and Paul sheweth that not the former, but the latter, was accompanied with the Holy Ghost, and looks upon it as a reason of his thanksgiving to God : "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost."

5. That the truths of the gospel were once confirmed by such signs and wonders as none could work but they who were extraordinarily gifted by the Holy Ghost for that end, may abundantly fix us in the faith of those truths, it being impossible that the God of truth should ever have set his seal unto a lie, Rom. iii. 4 : for Paul would have them confirmed and constant in the faith of these truths preached by him, because they were confirmed with such signs and wonders, and in the Holy Ghost.

6. The more a minister be persuaded, and above all doubt, of the truth of what he preaches, the more he believes, and doth therefore speak ; and the more he speaks as one who believes and hath ventured his soul upon the truth which he preaches, his preaching will prove the more powerful, and apt to work effectually upon the hearts of hearers ; and the more he doubts, the less he believes and is persuaded of these truths which he preacheth, his preaching will prove the more warsh [light, vain], lifeless, and coldrife [cold-hearted] ; for we may look on the third expression as one ground and cause of what is held forth in the first ; their gospel came "in power," because it came "in much assurance," or the preachers did assuredly believe the truths which they preached. (See 1 Cor. iii. 12 ; Psal. xvi. 10.)

7. The Lord hath indued his church, and especially believers in his church, with a gift of discerning, whereby they may be enabled, in some measure, to put difference betwixt a lively, powerful ministry, and that which is coldrife, dead, and lifeless ; betwixt the man who speaks because he believes, and him who though he speak yet believeth not : in the exercise of which gift they would not be rash in passing an immediate sentence upon the hearts of ministers, Col. ii. 23, except in so far as their inward temper doth kyth [appear] in their external actions, Matt. vii. 16 ; they would not be peremptory in passing certain judgment, especially to the worst, upon a doubtful evidence, 1 Cor. xiii. 7 ; nor yet too open-minded to vent what they judge, James i. 19, especially when they can gain nothing by so doing, but the raising of prejudices against a

minister in the minds of others, and consequently the marring of that good which they were reaping by him. However, that they are indued with this gift is clear from this, that Paul appeals to the Thessalonians as witnesses of that power and much assurance in which he preached, while he saith, "as ye know what manner of men we were among you."

8. It is a minister's wisdom, and a piece of Christian modesty, in speaking to his own commendation, to hold himself most by that for the truth whereof he may appeal to the ears, eyes, and chiefly to the consciences of his hearers : for so doth Paul appeal to their consciences for the truth of what he spoke ; "As ye know what manner of men we were among you."

9. These excellent gifts and graces, and other ministerial qualifications which Christ bestoweth upon godly and able ministers, are not bestowed upon them for their own sake, or particular satisfaction and advantage only, or so much as for the behoof of the church, and especially of the elect in it ; he dealeth the more liberally with ministers for the sake of those, and therefore they should improve and make use of all their receipts for the good of such : for Paul sheweth that he was enabled to preach "in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, for their sake."

VER. 6. And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost :

Here is a fourth reason of their thanksgiving to God ; which serveth also as an evidence moving Paul in charity to judge all these to be elected of God unto eternal life, in whom he had ground to conceive that this here spoken of was verified : and this reason of thanksgiving, or evidence of election, is taken from the saving effects of the gospel preached upon them, which are, first, generally proposed ; to wit, that in their life and practice they had been followers of, or conformed themselves to, that excellent pattern and example held forth unto them by their preachers and the Lord Christ. Secondly, illustrated ; 1. From the necessary antecedent, or moving cause of their so doing, which was, their receiving the word preached ; to wit, in their judgments, by understanding the sense, Acts viii. 30, and assenting to the truth of it, Heb. iv. 2 ; and in their heart and affections, by embracing the good things offered by it, 1 Tim. i. 15, and subjecting themselves in all things to be ruled by the prescript of it, Matt. vii. 24. 2. From an instance of some things wherein they did imitate such excellent patterns, to wit, that as Christ and his servants had readily preached the gospel with much spiritual joy, John iv. 34, notwithstanding many hard pressures and afflictions both from men and devils, Acts v. 41, 42 ; so they had cheerfully embraced the gospel, and adhered to it in the midst of much affliction and persecution, unto which they were so far from a base ceding, that they did courageously sustain the dint of it with joy, and a joy not carnal and natural, but spiritual, and such whereof the Holy Ghost is author.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though charity believeth all things, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, and maketh a man easy to be persuaded of any good thing in another; yet a Christian ought not to be foolishly credulous, so as to believe things without, far less against, evidence. But his charity in judging ought to be ruled by prudence, so as he believe nothing but upon some probability and appearance; for Paul did not judge them elect, but upon some evidence, even this, that "they were followers of him and of the Lord."

2. The way approved of God for attaining the faith of our own election, or a charitable persuasion of the election of others, is not to dive in immediately and at the first step upon the secrets of God's decree, as if we had stood in his counsel, Jer. xxiii. 18; but by way of discourse and reasoning to collect and conclude, that God hath elected us or others, from the work of saving grace, and the effects of that work y^ething [appearing] in us or them; for the apostle's scope here, as I show, is not only to give an additional reason of his thanksgiving, but also an evidence from which he did conclude their election, from the fruits and effects of saving grace in them: "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord," saith he.

3. It is the duty of Christians, and such as having made conscience of, doth strongly savour of a gracious change in them, to propound unto themselves for imitation, not the example of a multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2, but of those in whom they observe the most eminent evidences of a work of saving grace; for the apostle doth mention this as a matter of their commendation, a reason of thanksgiving to God on their behalf, and as an evidence of their election, that they did imitate him and his associates: "And ye became followers of us," saith he.

4. As there would be something worthy of imitation in the life of a minister, besides his plain, painful, and elaborate preaching, otherwise his naughty life may destroy more than his preaching can save, seeing all men are more addicted naturally to be guided with example than with precept, Gen. xlii. 16, and with an ill example rather than a good, Gal. ii. 13; so it is the duty of people not only to lend an ear to their minister's doctrine, but an eye to his pious life and conversation, that the same instructions being inculcate both upon the ear by his doctrine, and their eye by his example, they may work upon their hearts and lives the more effectually; for both these are implied while Paul commends them from this, that they did imitate their pastors: "And ye became followers of us."

5. The most gracious of Christians, whether they be private professors or public ministers, are not to be followed absolutely and in all things, but in so far as they are followers of Christ, whose example is the rule and measure of all examples, and is to be followed absolutely and without reservation in all his moral actions, wherein he intended to cast us a copy, Matt. xi. 29; for Paul mentioneth their following of the Lord in the last place, as that which did bound and set the just limits unto their following of

men: "Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord."

6. Such power is there in the word of God when it is received, that is, understood, assented unto and embraced, and especially when the word of promise is by faith received, and improved both for pardon of sin and subduing of it, Acts xv. 9, that it works a mighty change in the receivers of it, makes them quit their wonted guides, the course of this world, the prince of the power of the air, and the lusts of their flesh, Eph. ii. 2, and give themselves up to follow the examples of men most eminent in gracious practice, in so far as they are followers of Christ. Neither can any gracious change of this kind be expected in them, until the word be thus received by them; for Paul makes their receiving of the word a necessary antecedent of their following of him and Christ: "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word."

7. As persecution and affliction from men, incited by the devil, Rev. ii. 10, that inveterate enemy of man's salvation, is the common lot of those that embrace the truth; so it is not sufficient to prove a man elected of God, or that a real work of grace is wrought in him by God, that he embrace the truth under a fair sunshine of prosperity attending the professors of it, except besides other evidences, he be at least content and ready to undergo the utmost of affliction and persecution he may meet with for his profession, nor yet that he imitate Christ and his servants in pleasant, profitable, and creditable duties, except he also imitate them in promptness of mind to carry a cross for truth, and to undergo other duties which are more expensive, unpleasant to the flesh, and liable to shame and disgrace before the world; for Paul doth evidence their election, not from their following of him and Christ in any duty, or from receiving of the word simply, but from their receiving of it in much affliction.

8. Neither yet is it a sufficient proof of a gracious work in the heart, that a man do embrace some piece of a suffering lot for Christ: a hypocrite may endure somewhat before he change his way, Gal. iii. 4. There must be at least a readiness of mind to undergo much affliction, yea, the utmost that Satan's malice and power can reach unto; for Paul doth instance their praiseworthy imitation of Christ and his followers in this, "they received the word in much affliction."

9. Neither is it yet sufficient that a man endure much affliction and variety of crosses for the gospel's sake, if so be he do it droopingly, and because necessity drives him to it; a hypocrite may suffer much on that account, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. There must be also a cheerful frame of spirit under suffering; for, saith he, "ye received the word in much affliction, with joy."

10. Neither is it yet sufficient that a man endure affliction with joy, except it be a joy of the right stamp, and whereof the Spirit of God is the author; a joy arising from spiritual grounds, such as that the least grain weight of the bitter gall and wormwood in our cup is measured out by the hand of Providence, Luke xii. 6, 7, which turneth all things about for good, Rom. viii. 28, that by much affliction we are made like our

Master, Phil. iii. 10, that by our sufferings the church of God is edified, truth is confirmed, Phil. i. 7, and aliens made to inquire after it, Phil. i. 13, and that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. A real hypocrite may attain to a carnal, natural joy in suffering, arising from natural grounds, such as a misapplication of rich promises made unto sufferers, as if they did not suppose the grace of faith in him who suffers, Phil. i. 29, and an ambitious desire to leave behind him the name of constancy, and of being a martyr and sufferer for truth; it is not this latter, but the former joy which makes a lively frame of spirit under the cross: for, saith he, in "much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."

VER. 7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

The apostle doth enlarge what he presently said of their courage, patience, and cheerfulness in receiving the truth, and adhering to it, in the midst of many pressures and afflictions; first, from this, that not only their whole church in general, but almost all the members thereof in particular, were so many ensamples and lively patterns, to wit, for their patience, cheerfulness, courage, constancy, (which he implied to have been eminently in them, ver. 6,) and for their other Christian virtues, unto all believers which were either in Macedonia, their own nation, Acts xxvii. 2, or in the bordering nation of Achaia, Acts xix. 21.

DOCTRINES.

1. Then are Christians praiseworthy for the grace of God in them, and their graces a speaking mark of their election, both unto themselves and others, when they do not rest upon the smallest measures, but by growing in grace do, from a principle of holy emulation, labour to outstrip others, even those who were in Christ before them; for Paul, by way of thanksgiving, ver. 2, (whereof the purpose of this verse may be looked upon as an additional reason,) commendeth the grace of God bestowed upon the Thessalonians, as a speaking mark of their election, ver. 4, from this, that through reason of their growth in grace, they were "ensamples unto all who believed in Macedonia and Achaia."

2. Such may be the conceitedness of old professors, of their measure of grace already received, Luke xv. 28, 29; such may be their undervaluing of others, Acts xxi. 28, 29, provoking the Lord to withdraw his influence in good measure from them, Luke xviii. 14; and such may be the edge of zeal in new beginners, Gal. v. 7, and the fresh sense of mercy newly received by them, Gal. iv. 15, occasioning the Lord's dispensing more of his special influence to them, Jer. ii. 2, 3, that the former may be far outstripped, as to growth in grace, by the latter, and those who were last may become first; for though some of them, at least, in Macedonia (namely, the church at Philippi, Acts xvi. 12, with 17,) were converted to Christ before the Thessalonians, yet in a short space the Thessalonians became "ensamples unto all who believed in Macedonia and Achaia."

3. Though there should be a holy emulation and strife among Christians, who can advance in the way of piety with greatest diligence, Heb. x. 24, yet those who are outstripped would not, yea, need not be carnally emulous or envious at those who are before them, seeing the progress of one is the benefit and advantage of another, in so far as the outstripped Christian hath a new incitement and encouragement to duty, from the example of those who are further advanced than he is; for those Thessalonians having outstripped all who believed in Macedonia and Achaia, became ensamples to them.

4. It adds the more matter of commendation unto a church, when not only their external church state, being exactly framed according to the prescript of God's word, becometh an imitable pattern for other churches besides, but when also particular church members do so walk in the practice of all Christian virtues and duties suitable unto that state, as that each of them, for the work of saving grace shining forth in them, becomes a laudable pattern for others to follow; for Paul commendeth the Thessalonians not so much from this, that their whole church in general was an ensample, but almost all the members thereof were so many ensamples and lively patterns to be followed by others: "So that ye were," not an ensample, but "ensamples."

5. As the merciful Lord, besides the word of truth pointing out the way of our duty, hath thought it necessary to furnish us with the examples of others who have trod in the path of duty before us, that so we may know our duty to be feasible, seeing men subject to the like infirmities have already practised it, James v. 17; and the neglect of duty to be the more hazardous, seeing all who have walked in the way of duty before us will be made use of as witnesses against us, Heb. xi. 7, and xii. 1: so the same Lord hath thought it fit to provide us with variety of such examples, whereof some are more some less eminent, that they who are discouraged to follow eminent examples, as despairing ever to come near their copy, may take unto them courage and heart to imitate those whose examples were of lesser note and magnitude. For not only Christ and the apostles were patterns to be imitated by those of Macedonia and Achaia as well as by those of Thessalonica, ver. 6, but the Thessalonians also are held forth for ensamples to them: "Ye were ensamples to all that believe," &c.

VER. 8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

In this verse he doth first clear what he spoke, ver. 7, by showing how they became such imitable patterns to their nearest neighbours, to wit, because the gospel, here called "the word of the Lord," as being revealed by him, and having the Lord Christ for the main subject whereof it treateth, 1 Cor. ii. 2; because, I say, the gospel was propagated by them, and sounded out from

them as with the noise of a trumpet, for the word in the original beareth so much, towards those regions : which must not be understood of the first publishing of the gospel in those places, it being clear that the gospel was preached, at least in Philippi by Paul himself, before that time, Acts xvi. 12, but of a reiterated report of it, which made the gospel in a manner fresh and new unto them, because of those excellent effects wrought upon the Thessalonians by it, and reported of jointly with it : which report, as it seemeth, was carried by those of Thessalonica, who did usually traffic and keep commerce in those regions. Next he doth further amplify what he mentioned of the fruits of the gospel among them, ver. 6, from that general fame of their eminency in grace, and especially in the grace of faith in God, which was spread abroad beyond the confines of their nearest neighbours, in regions where they themselves had no commerce, yea, "in every place," to wit, where Paul did travel, as the last clause of the verse doth clear, where he sheweth the fame of their graces was such in all these places, that there was no necessity for him to speak any thing, as to the giving of information ; they were already made so notorious unto all.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of all who live where the gospel is preached, to carry a good report of Christ and the gospel, both by their word and work, into all places where they do resort, if so they may thereby allure others with whom they converse to think well of Christ and embrace the gospel, which maketh an offer of him : for the publishing of the gospel in Macedonia and Achaia, here spoken of, was chiefly by means of such Thessalonians as did traffic in those places : for, "from you sounded out the word of the Lord."

2. There is not any one thing which maketh the gospel sound louder, the sound of it to be heard better, and its offer embraced more readily, than when a sound profession is beautified, adorned, and seconded by sober, sincere, painful and conscientious practice : for it was such a profession seconded with such a practice in these of Thessalonica, which made the gospel sound from them in Macedonia and Achaia : the word signifies to sound shrill and far, as with the noise of a trumpet or voice of a lion-herald.

3. It tendeth much for giving credit to the gospel far and near, that great cities and honourable personages do once receive it ; for Thessalonica was the chief city in all Macedonia, where were many women of credit and note, Acts xvii. 4 ; and therefore upon their receiving the gospel, the word of the Lord did sound out in all Macedonia and Achaia.

4. There is nothing more ordinary for God, than to outwit the devil and his most witty instruments, in so far as what is intended by them as the most probable mean to destroy the gospel, the Lord doth make it tend to the further spreading of it : for therefore doubtless did Satan and his instruments raise so hot a persecution against the gospel in Thessalonica, chap. ii. 14, because they thought the noise of that ill usage which the

gospel did meet with in that prime city, spreading far and near, would scare others from embracing it, and yet the Lord makes the very same thing, to wit, the spreading report of the cruelty of persecutors, together with the report of constancy in believers, a mean of spreading the gospel far and near. "In every place," saith he, "your faith to God-ward is spread abroad."

5. Though the grace of faith be rooted in the heart and cannot be immediately seen, yet where-ever it is, it cannot long be hid, but needs must discover itself by the external fruits, which follow upon it and flow from it : for the fame of their faith did spread abroad by manifesting itself in its fruits.

6. The Lord doth give a name for faith and piety beyond others, unto some in mercy, that thereby they may be the more engaged unto perseverance and constancy, and so to walk answerably unto their name, as knowing that the more famous they are, the more will be expected from them : for he mentioneth this of the general fame that was spread of their graces in all the churches, as a strong motive unto constancy, which, as I show, is the scope of all his purpose in the first part of the epistle.

7. It is a piece of a minister's duty in relation to his flock, as to press conscience-making of duty upon them, 1 Tim. vi. 17, rebuke them sometimes sharply, Tit. i. 13, yea, and to complain of them both to God and man for palpable neglect of duty, Isa. xlix. 4 ; so to commend them also unto others, even to strangers, for the good that is in them, that thereby they themselves may be the more encouraged in their duty, chap. iv. 9, 10, and others provoked to follow them in that which is so praiseworthy, 2 Cor. ix. 2 ; and that God (the author of all good, James i. 17,) may hereby get glory, 2 Cor. viii. 16, &c. For while Paul sheweth he had not need to speak any thing to the commendation of the Thessalonians, their fame was spread so generally among the churches, he implieth it was his usual way wherever he came, to commend the graces of God in such, among whom his ministry had been effectual.

VER. 9. For they themselves show of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God,

Paul doth here make the truth of what he presently spoke appear, that the fame and report of their graces was so generally spread in all places, that he needed not speak any thing to their commendation : and he makes it appear from this, that they themselves, that is, the foreign churches among whom he conversed, were able to give him a perfect account of the gospel's progress among the Thessalonians, and more particularly they did give him an account of two things ; the first relates to Paul himself and his associates ; to wit, what manner of entrance they had to Thessalonica, whereby he doth not mean, that either they had entered that city or were received by it, in any great pomp or worldly state. The history, Acts xvii. 1, &c., sheweth the con-

trary; but he thereby expresseth their own ministerial carriage, and the Lord's countenancing of their ministry among that people, spoken of briefly, ver. 5, and more largely, chap. ii. 1—13.

The second thing whereof those foreign churches did give Paul an account, relateth to the Thessalonians, and the fruit of Paul's ministry among them; to wit, first, of the work of their conversion, and turning unto God from their idols or false gods, whom they did formerly worship; which work of turning to God consists in the exercise of faith and repentance, as appears from Isa. lv. 2, with 7, where coming to God, forsaking of sinful ways, turning to the Lord, are spoken of as expressing pieces and parts of one and the same thing. Secondly, of the sincerity of this work, evidencing itself in a twofold end or fruit of their conversion, the first whereof is in this verse, to wit, their doing service to God set forth by two epithets, to distinguish him from idols. First, he is the "living" God, who hath life in himself, John i. 4, and is the author and preserver of life unto others, Acts xvii. 28, in opposition to their dumb and lifeless idols, as sun, moon, and stars, which the Gentiles worshipped, Ps. cxxxv. 13, &c. Next he is the "true" God, the word in the original doth not so much express his fidelity and that truth, which he sheweth in performing what he speaketh, (in which respect he is also the true God, Matt. v. 8,) as the truth of his being and nature; he is really and truly God, in opposition to another sort of heathen idols, which though they were not lifeless as the former, but possibly men or spirits, yet they were not true, or really gods, but by nature no gods, Gal. iv. 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christians to inform themselves, so far as possibly and conveniently they may, how the work of God doth thrive in foreign churches, as being members of the same body, 1 Cor. x. 17; and that thereby they may have matter of rejoicing in God, chap. iii. 6, 7, and imitation for themselves, 2 Cor. ix. 2, when things go well, and of fellow feeling with Christ's afflicted members, Heb. xiii. 3, and wrestling with God on their behalf, xiii. 18, 19, when it is otherways: for believers far and near had informed themselves so well of the state of the church at Thessalonica, that they were able to give Paul an account of it: for "they themselves show of us," saith he.

2. It is the duty of Christians, not enviously to suppress, but cheerfully to publish the deserved commendation of others, and the praise of God's glorious grace manifested to them beyond their neighbours, even though we should thereby seem to darken our own reputation being compared with theirs: for so did these other churches cheerfully publish the deserved praises of the Thessalonians: "They themselves show of us:" the word signifies to declare a thing boldly, freely, and with good will, as ambassadors do return their answer from foreign states.

3. Whatever praiseworthy grace is among the Lord's people, it is ordinarily conveyed unto them from the Lord by means of a public ministry, so that a people cannot well be com-

mended, except the minister whom God hath made instrumental for their good be in some respect commended also; and therefore for a people to boast of their graces received, and to trample under foot the reputation of a faithful ministry, by whose means they were bestowed, is most absurd, and in point of reason inconsistent: for those believers being to set forth the praises of the church at Thessalonica, begin with the commendation of Paul and his associates, who were their ministers, and by whose means they were converted. "They show what manner of entering in we had unto you," and how, to wit, by that mean ye turned to God.

4. As all men are by nature averse from God, with their backs upon him, and full of enmity in all the faculties of their soul, Rom. viii. 7, and members of their body, against him, Rom. vi. 19; so there is always somewhat which every man naturally is turned unto, and doth set up to himself in God's stead, by giving unto it the chief and choice of his affections, which are God's due: for while it is said, "they turned to God from idols," it implieth that they were turned away from God, and addicted to their idols.

5. Wherever the gospel is powerfully accompanied with the Lord's blessing, to bring about a work of saving grace in a sinner, there will be a turning from, and abandoning of whatsoever did keep that place in the heart which is due to God, whether idols properly so called, when Divine worship is purposely given to any thing, under any respect, besides the true God, Exod. xxxii. 5, 6, with 1 Cor. x. 7, or improperly, when though not the outward worship, yet the inward respect and honour, such as the measure of love, joy, confidence, or fear due to God, is given to the creature, whether it be a man's belly, Phil. iii. 19, or his wealth, Eph. v. 5; for it was mentioned of these Thessalonians, that they had "turned from idols," as a fruit of the gospel powerfully preached among them.

6. It will not prove a powerful and gracious work of the gospel upon a man's heart that he forsake his idols, except he also turn to God, and bestow upon him that inward respect, external worship, pains and diligence, which he did formerly give unto them; otherwise, if he only turn from a greater degree of idolatry to a lesser, or from all idolatry to practical atheism, or if he quit a false religion, and turn wholly irreligious and a mere nullifidian, he doth only change his service but not his master, he serveth Satan and some one or other of his own lusts still: for it is mentioned of them, as an evidence of a gracious work among them, they had "turned from idols to God."

7. Though the Lord alone, without any actual concurrence of our free-will, doth at first regenerate us, by creating gracious habits and principles of a new life in us, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, (who then are dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, and consequently can contribute nothing towards our own quickening,) yet in the after progress of the work of grace, we are not wholly patients, but from a principle of grace in us, 2 Tim. i. 6, we do also work, being first acted and wrought upon by God, Cant. iv. 16; for, saith he, "ye had

turned to God." The word is of an active signification.

8. Then doth a sinner turn sincerely from sin to God, when he devotes himself wholly to God as his Lord and sovereign, to do him worship and service according to the prescript of his word, Matt. v. 9. Idle sluggards have not sincerely turned to God: for, as a mark of their sincerity in turning, it is mentioned, they turned to God, "to serve the true and living God."

9. In our doing service to God, we should carefully labour to take him up in those his divine properties and glorious attributes, by which he hath made himself known to us in his word, that so the known worth of him whom we do serve may make his service lovely, and our service given unto him, to be accepted of by him, as being performed to that God whom Scripture revealeth to be God, and not to a mis-shapen deity or fancy of our own brains: for it is mentioned of them, in their giving service to God, they took him up as the "living and true God," to hearten them in his service, and to distinguish him from dead idols and false gods: "To serve the living and true God."

VER. 10. And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Here is a second thing wherein the sincerity of their conversion did make itself evident, which is first propounded, to wit, their patient waiting for, and hopeful expectation of, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, his second coming from heaven to judgment. Second, The grounds of this their hope and expectation are unfolded in a description of Christ; 1. From his resurrection from the dead, by the power of the Father, so that though he was once dead, he is now alive; and therefore their waiting for his second coming was not without ground. 2. From his office, whereby as in the mean time he doth deliver in part, so at his second coming he shall completely deliver us, saith Paul, that is, all sincere believers (as he was) from the wrath to come, that is, the punishment, woe, and vengeance due to all mankind for sin, Eph. ii. 3; and which he shall fully execute at the last day upon all unbelievers, 2 Thess. i. 7—9, and therefore they, to wit, believers, had good ground to expect his second coming, and good by his coming.

Hence learn, 1. Several marks of sound conversion, or of a sincere convert. 1. He doth so turn to God and give him service, as he looks upon God with an eye to Christ, whom he serveth equally with the Father, and through whom he approacheth to the Father, John xiv. 6, as to a God reconciled, whose justice is satisfied and his wrath appeased through him, Matt. iii. 17; for it is mentioned, as a mark of the sincerity of their conversion, that, as they turned to serve God the Father, ver. 9, so they also gave divine honour to his Son, by hoping in him, waiting for him, and looking to him as an interposer betwixt them and the dint of God's deserved wrath: "They turned to wait for his Son—which delivered us from the wrath to come." 2. A sincere convert doth turn to God

to give him service, not for a start and season only, with a purpose to return to his idols when he pleaseth, but to continue constant in his service so long as he liveth, and even while [till] Christ come to loose him from it; for the word rendered "to wait," signifieth to remain constant, and so doth point at their patient continuance in the service of God. 3. A sincere convert can never rest satisfied with his present receipts, or with any thing he can enjoy upon earth; his expectation and hopes do carry him beyond time, to look for heaven, for glory, a life of light and joy, to be bestowed upon him by Christ, when he cometh to judge the world; for waiting for Christ's second coming is mentioned as a fruit and consequence of their sincere conversion: "And to wait for his Son." 4. A sincere convert is one to whom (especially when in a right temper) Christ's second coming (although it be abhorred by wicked atheists, Acts xxiv. 25, yet) is not terrible, but a thing hoped for, and much longed after; for they "turned to wait for his Son." 5. A sincere convert will not, when in a right temper, quarrel with God, because his promises want a fixed date, or their performance is delayed, but makes it his work to keep himself constantly in a suitable frame, as if they were to be performed presently, and yet to wait upon God's leisure with contentment until his time come to perform what he hath promised; for their waiting on Christ's second coming implieth both these, a keeping of themselves in a posture ready for it, and a patient on-waiting on God's leisure so long as it is delayed: "And to wait for his Son."

2. We may learn hence divers doctrinal truths concerning Christ, wherein the apostle had doubtless instructed the Thessalonians at greater length, but doth now propound them in most wonderful brevity, as, 1. That Jesus Christ is true God; for he calls him the Son of the Father, and therefore of the same substance with him, even God himself: "To wait for the Son of God." 2. He is also man; for it is implied he was once dead, and therefore he behoved to be also man; "whom he raised from the dead." 3. Though he have two natures, yet he is but one person; for he speaks of the Son of God and him who was dead, not as of two, but as of one and the same: "For his Son, whom he raised from the dead." 4. Jesus Christ, at his Father's appointment, Psa. xl., hath undertaken to be a Saviour, Redeemer, and deliverer of the elect from that wrath which is due to them for sin; for therefore is he called "Jesus," which signifies a saviour, Matt. i. 21, and is said "to deliver us from the wrath to come." 5. Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, did give himself to death, thereby to satisfy provoked justice for the sins of the elect; for it is implied he was dead, while it is said, "Whom he raised from the dead." 6. Jesus Christ having satisfied the Father's justice by his death, was loosed out of prison, raised up from death, and absolved by the Father, as having performed all he undertook: for, "He raised him from the dead." 7. Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, did ascend to heaven, to take possession of it in name of the elect, Eph. ii., and to make application unto the elect of all those good things which he had purchased by his death, Acts v. 31; for that they

looked for him "from heaven," saith he is there, and consequently that he ascended thither. 8. Jesus Christ in his bodily presence doth now reside in heaven, and not upon earth; for there he resides, whence he is expected to come: "And to wait for his Son from heaven." 9. As Jesus Christ did deliver the elect from the wrath to come, by paying of a sufficient ransom to provoked justice in his death; so he is carrying on, while he is now in heaven, the work of their delivery towards perfection, by making application of the redemption purchased, both to pardon sin in its guilt, and to subdue sin in its strength, Acts v. 31; for the word "delivered," in the original, may be read in the present time, as well as the preterit, "Who delivereth us." 10. Jesus Christ shall again return from heaven, and come to earth at the last day, to judge the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. iv. 1, for his coming is waited for by believers, and therefore it must be: "To wait" for his coming. 11. Then, and at that time, shall Jesus Christ complete the work of the elects' delivery from that wrath to come, by acquitting them openly, and pronouncing, as their judge, that blessed sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," Matt. xxv.; for so much is implied, while his delivering of us from the wrath to come is annexed to his second coming: "Look for his Son—who delivered, or delivereth us from the wrath to come." 12. Jesus Christ the Judge shall not then acquit or deliver all from that wrath, but only such who here have lived by faith, and fled to him for a refuge, and laid hold upon the ransom paid by him; for, saith he, who delivereth "us," to wit Paul with the believing Thessalonians, and such believers as they were, leaving all others to drink the dregs of that most bitter cup of God's unmixed wrath for ever and ever, John iii. 36.

CHAPTER II.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle doth further incite them to constancy and perseverance, by a relation of his ministerial carriage, to ver. 13, and of the success of his ministry among them, to ver. 17, which he doth summarily propone, viz. that his entrance unto them was not in vain, ver. 1, which he proveth: First, from his holy boldness to preach among them, notwithstanding great apparent hazard, ver. 2. Secondly, from the sincerity, both of his doctrine and of his own heart, in preaching it, ver. 3; which latter he doth further clear, first, from his great aim to please God, ver. 4; secondly, by clearing himself of three vices opposite to sincerity, to wit, flattery and covetousness, ver. 5, and affectation even of that glory which was otherwise due unto him, ver. 6; and, thirdly, by showing he was of a meek and amiable deportment among them, as of a nurse to her children, ver. 7; which he proveth, first, from that ardent desire he had to do and suffer the utmost for their spiritual nourishment, and this only from love to them, ver. 8; secondly, from his labouring unto weariness to prevent their burthen and

expense, ver. 9; thirdly, from his Christian example which did shine before them, ver. 10, chiefly in the duties of his particular calling, ver. 11, 12. After this, he relates the great success his ministry had among them, ver. 13, evidenced by their constancy in suffering, ver. 14; and hence, doth take occasion to set forth the Jews, their godless persecutions, in their vilest colours, ver. 15, 16. In the second part of the chapter he doth pursue his main scope, by convincing them of his intimate affection to them, while he excuseth his long absence from them, first, from his earnest desire and purpose he had to see them, ver. 17; secondly, from his reiterated enterprize to fulfil his purpose, wherein Satan had hindered him, ver. 18. The reason of which his desire and enterprize was that high esteem he had of them, and accession of glory he looked for at the great day, as a fair reward of his pains among them, ver. 19, 20.

VER. 1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

The apostle being, in order to the further incitement of these Thessalonians unto constancy in the doctrine received, to put them in mind of the dignity of his ministry, and of his own sincerity in the discharge of it among them, doth here propone a brief sum of all he hath to say to that purpose, to wit, "that his entrance in unto them," that is, his undertaking of that employment to preach the gospel among them, and his carriage in that employment, "was not in vain;" that is, was not, first, rashly undertaken, without a call from God; nor, secondly, discharged by him perfunctoriously, or in a vain show, but in sincerity; nor yet, thirdly, was it without fruit among them: for the following purpose, which serveth as a commentary to this verse, doth show that the vanity which he removes from his entrance to them must be extended to all those: besides, the force of the word will bear so much, that being a vain thing, or done vainly, which is done rashly or without a warrant from God, which is done with more of vain show than of real solidity and sincerity, and which being done hath no effect or fruit. And for the truth of this assertion he appeals to their own conscience and knowledge, and thereby doth also confirm the truth of that report which he showed, chap. i. 9, was spread among the foreign churches concerning his manner of entering in unto them, as appears from the causal particle "for."

Hence learn, 1. This may, and in reason should, commend the love of truth unto a people, and make them constantly cleave unto it, that truth hath been preached unto them by ministers sent from God for that very end, whose life and practice have preached unto them as well as their doctrine, and whose pains and travel hath been blessed of God among them, to their own discerning; for the apostle's scope in this first part of the chapter, by a narration of his call from God to preach unto them, of his ministerial carriage among them, and of the fruits of his labours towards them, is to incite them to con-

stancy and perseverance in the doctrine received.

2. That others do report well of us, and that our name, and fame, for the graces of God bestowed upon us, be fragrant among many, is then a mercy when our consciences can bear testimony that there is some ground and reason for it; otherwise to have a name that we are living and yet be dead, increaseth our guilt, and proveth a snare, Rev. iii. 1: for the apostle having shown, chap. i. ver. 8, how well they were reported of by foreign churches, doth here imply that they themselves knew there was reason for it; "For yourselves know," &c.

3. It is not enough that a minister be well reported of among strangers for sincerity and diligence, except he do approve himself to the consciences of his hearers, so as he may appeal to them for the truth of what strangers do report of him: for Paul appeals to the Thessalonians themselves about the truth of that which foreign churches reported of his entry unto them: "For yourselves know our entrance in unto you."

4. Where a minister is called of God, and carrieth himself sincerely and faithfully in his calling, his preaching and other pains do very rarely, if ever, want fruit, either sooner or later, John iv. 37, 38, either manifest or secret, John xiv. 42, for "Paul's entrance in unto them was not in vain;" that is, as was expounded, not without a call from God, not in vain show, and without sincerity and diligence, and therefore it was not in vain, without fruit.

VER. 2. But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

He doth here prove his entrance was not in vain, mainly as to the first thing, though not excluding the other two, which I show was pointed at in that expression, to wit, that his undertaking of that employment was not rashly, but at God's appointment. One convincing evidence whereof was, that he ventured upon it over the belly of such discouragements and disadvantages, as no wise man without a call from God would ever have set his face against. And first, he mentions what sufferings in his body, and disgraceful injuries against his reputation and credit, he had sustained for preaching the gospel a little before he came to them, as they themselves knew, in their neighbouring city of Philippi, where he was most injuriously and shamefully used. (See Acts xvi. 22—24.) And next, he shows that all his sufferings of that sort were so far from making him shrink, that notwithstanding them all, he took the boldness, being furnished thereunto by God's grace and assistance, (and therefore it is called "a boldness in God,") to preach the gospel publicly, concealing no necessary truth, without all base fear of flesh, (as the word rendered "we were bold" doth imply;) and that in Thessalonica, the prime city of all Macedonia, where were most Jews, enemies

to the gospel, and therefore he might in all probability have expected to incur as much hazard there as in any place else, which the event did verify. For, as he shows in the close of the verse, he preached there with much contention; the word signifieth combating or fighting, to wit, both by disputing with, and suffering from his malicious opposites: which contention, together with his boldness here spoken of, is clearly held forth, Acts xvii. from ver. 1 to 10.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though a man's courageous venturing upon probable or certain sufferings doth not itself alone prove his doctrine to be truth, or his calling from God to preach that doctrine, Matt. xxiii. 15; yet, when other more firm arguments are not wanting, taken from the doctrine itself, the man's ministerial carriage, the success of his pains among the Lord's people, that other taken from his constancy and courage in suffering, joined with them, doth not want its own weight: for Paul joineth this of his courage in suffering with other arguments which follow, to prove his entrance was not in vain, that is, his doctrine and calling were from God: "But even after that we had suffered before, we were bold," &c.

2. That a minister's pains may not be without fruit, and in that respect vain among a people, he should make conscience to deliver his message with freedom and boldness, so as he omit no necessary truth for fear of flesh, Acts xx. 20; and in an authoritative way make thorough application of general truths (by rebuking, comforting, exhorting, reproving) to the several ranks of hearers, 2 Tim. iv. 2, without which a man's ministry doth for the most part prove but coldrite [cold-hearted], dead and lifeless: for the apostle mentions this of his boldness to speak, or freedom and boldness which he used in speaking, as a reason why his entrance was not in vain or without success: "But we were bold in our God to speak."

3. As a suffering lot doth usually attend sincere and faithful ministers, so it often falls out that they meet with most of trouble and suffering at the close of some notable piece of service done to their master Christ. Satan's malice is hereby more provoked, Acts xvi. 18, 19; and God giveth way to his malice then, to teach his servants that their reward is not to be expected here, Acts xiv. 19, with 22; and to divert them, by this humbling exercise, from being transported with lofty thoughts of themselves, arising from their great success, 2 Cor. xii. 7: for Paul did suffer much, and was "shamefully entreated at Philippi," immediately after he had erected a throne and church for Christ in that place, Acts xvi. 12, with xix. 4.

4. Where grace is lively and vigorous, or where habitual grace is quickened by present influence from God, and when duty is sweetened by the faith of an interest in God who doth enjoin it, afflictions, crosses, and sufferings for well-doing will be so far from quenching zeal, that they will rather inflame it: for though Paul had suffered much before in Philippi, yet he was bold to preach at Thessalonica; being assisted by God, and having his interest in God as his own

made clear, which is pointed at in the expression, "we were bold in our God."

5. A minister or any other should so commend himself, and the good that is in him or done by him, when necessity puts him to it, 2 Cor. xii. 11, as that he make the result of all to be his ascribing the praise and glory of all unto God: for Paul doth so commend his own courage and boldness, as he gives God the praise of it: "We were bold in our God," or by the help and assistance of our God.

6. Trouble and trial bypast doth not exempt from trouble in time to come. Every new duty almost is attended with some new trial and difficulty, (see the reasons upon Doct. 3.) for though Paul had suffered much a little before at Philippi, yet he meets with new troubles here: "To speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."

VER. 3. For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

He adds a second argument to prove his entrance was not in vain, mainly, as to the second thing I showed was pointed at by that expression, to wit, that he did not discharge the employment of preaching the gospel among them perfunctoriously, or in a vain show, as seeming to do much, but in effect doing nothing. And that his entrance was not so in vain, he proveth, both from the sincerity of the doctrine preached, and of his own heart in preaching it: where, first, he calls his preaching of the gospel his exhortation, not only because his doctrine was consolatory to the afflicted, (for the word signifieth also consolation,) but also, and mainly, because all his preaching did end in pithy application by exhorting them earnestly, humbly, and affectionately (as the word also doth bear) to cleave and walk according to the truths, whether doctrinal or practical, which were delivered by him. Next he removes from his preaching three opposites of sincerity, the first two whereof point at the sincerity and incorruptness of his doctrine. 1. It was not "of deceit," or of ensnaring and seducing error, as the word signifieth, that is, it was not fitted to the corrupt opinions of men, as the preaching of the false apostles was, who mingled the law with the gospel, to eschew the hatred of the Jews, Gal. v. 11. 2. It was not "of uncleanness," that is, it was not fitted to countenance men in their vice and filthy lusts, as the preaching of the false apostles was, Jude 10, &c. The third doth point at the sincerity of his own heart in preaching; his exhortation was not "in guile," that is, he did not deceitfully seek his own worldly advantage from them, under a pretext of seeking God's glory in their salvation, as he more fully declares, ver. 5, 6.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is sincerity and faithfulness in a minister's carriage that breeds him much trouble, strife, and suffering from his carnal hearers, who cannot well comport with ministers except they so preach as to please their humour: for the purpose of this verse, holding forth Paul's sincerity,

may be looked upon as the occasion of his trouble spoken of, ver. 2: "For our exhortation was not of deceit."

2. The most effectual way to convince others of sin who are guilty, or at least to render them inexcusable, is to make our carriage reprove them, by holding forth in our life and practice a lively copy of such virtues as are contrary to their vices: the voice of a man's work doth pass further than of his word: for it may be very probably conceived that the apostle, in avowing his sincerity, and purging himself of the vices mentioned here, and in the verses following, hath an eye to the false teachers who were guilty of these evils, and whom he doth hereby reprove: "For our exhortation was not of deceit."

3. It is inexcusable boldness, daring presumption, and such as argues him, who is guilty of it, an insincere, rotten-hearted hypocrite, when a man doth purposely wrest the word of truth, to give some seeming countenance unto the erroneous opinions, or loose licentious practices, of such whose hatred he would decline, and whose favour he would gain: for to prove that his entrance was not in vain, or his carriage was not insincere, he saith, "his exhortation was not of deceit or of uncleanness," implying, if it had been so, he would have been a gross hypocrite.

4. When a man doth bend his wit to patronize error in opinion, he will at last prove no great unfriend, but a secret favourer of profanity and vice: for so much is implied, that if his exhortation had been of deceit, it would have been "of uncleanness" also.

5. It is not sufficient that a minister do not wrest truth, but preach the sincere word without mixture, except he also preach it sincerely, with a single eye to God's honour, and the salvation of his people, without any allowed-to-look towards base or by-ends: for Paul thinks it not enough to remove corruptness from his doctrine, except he also purge himself of insincerity in the delivery of it, while he saith, "not in guile."

VER. 4. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

The apostle having removed from himself the opposites of sincerity, ver. 3, doth here positively affirm, that his behaviour in his ministry was sincere, whereof he gives this one instance, that his design in preaching, and in all the other pieces of his ministerial employment, was never to please the sinful humours of men, but to approve himself unto God, and to be approved of him: and he gives two reasons inducing him thereto. 1. The consideration of that rich favour, and the conscience of that great trust put on him by God, who having allowed him, or approved and judged him fit, as the word signifieth, did intrust him with the gospel, or concredit the public dispensing of it unto him. 2. The consideration of God's omniscience, who knows the heart, Jer. xvii. 10, makes inquiry into the heart, and passeth sentence upon men according to their heart, 1 Sam. xvi. 27.

DOCTRINES.

1. The sin of man-pleasing cannot stand with sincerity and pleasing of God in any man, and least of all in a minister: (see in what respects a minister should and may please man without sin, and in what respects not, upon Gal. i. 10, Doct. 6,) for he gives that as an instance of his sincerity, and study to please the Lord, he "spoke not as pleasing men, but God."

2. It is one of Satan's great designs to possess the minds of people against the most faithful of Christ's servants, with strong suspicions that though there be nothing blameworthy in their external walk, they may yet be guilty of inward abominations, as of pride, hypocrisy, covetousness, unstraightness, and such like, because he knows that as nothing marreth the edification of people more than rooted prejudices of that kind against their ministers, so that though honest ministers may justly deny the charge, yet they cannot so easily demonstrate to the prejudged party their own freedom from the guilt charged, there being always somewhat in the best actions of most innocent men that may by an uncharitable and prejudged on-looker be constructed to spring from some of those bitter roots: and therefore the servant of Christ should labour not only to keep himself free of the evils, but also from doing any thing which may savour of them, or give unto people any just occasion to conceive that he is tainted with them: for Paul's clearing himself of those inward abominations, here and in the preceding and following verses, implieth that some did suspect him guilty, and that he walked so as he might justly clear himself that he was free of them: "Even so we speak, not as pleasing men."

3. Then do we walk sincerely, when, as in every other thing, so especially in the duties of our particular calling we labour to please, and to approve ourselves unto the Lord, to wit, by doing not only what he commands, Rom. xii. 2, but also in the manner which he prescribes, 1 Cor. x. 31, and especially, by seeking after and resting satisfied with his approbation of what we do for matter and manner, without stepping one hair-breadth off the road-way of duty, for catching applause or approbation of man: for Paul gives this as an instance of his sincerity, that, in the duties of his particular calling as a minister, he did labour to please God, or approve himself unto him: "Even so we speak; not as pleasing men but God."

4. As the ministerial calling is of any other the greatest trust, there being no less concredited to the person employed in it than the gospel of Christ, and the souls of his people, Heb. xiii. 17, so none should be intrusted with that weighty charge, but such as after trial are found in some tolerable measure fitted for it: for Paul sheweth he was, when made a minister, "put in trust with the gospel," and this after he was "allowed" of God; the word signifieth proved and judged fit, which implieth not that he had any fitness of himself, but the Lord, of unfit, did make him fit, Gal. i. 18, and did then intrust him with the gospel.

5. There is not any thing prevails more strongly with an ingenuous and gracious heart

to make him in all things please the Lord, than the serious remembrance of his rich receipts from him, and how much he stands a debtor to God's free grace and favour on that account: for Paul makes the mercy manifested by God in making him a minister, a reason why he studied in all things to please him: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak."

6. It is a speaking evidence of a minister's call from God, when the conscience of his calling prevailleth with him to order himself in all the pieces of his employment, both for matter and manner, as that he may approve himself to God who hath called him: for the conscience of Paul's calling prevailed so with him: "As we were allowed to be put in trust, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God."

7. As God who knoweth the heart doth chiefly judge of man's actions according to that frame of heart wherewith he doth discharge them; so then do we know and believe that it is so, when our faith and knowledge of it doth make us in all our actions take such inspection of the heart, as that for our inward sincerity we may approve ourselves unto him who trieth our hearts: for the knowledge of this truth did so work upon Paul, while he saith, "we speak as pleasing God, who trieth the hearts."

VER. 5. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness.

The apostle doth here remove from himself and his ministry two other vices, which are inconsistent with that single-hearted sincerity that ought to be in a minister; and hereby doth also meet with the false apostles, who were tainted with the vices following: first, he used not "flattering words," that is, speeches fitted to please the carnal corrupt humours of men, for gaining of favour or some reward from them; the word in the original is taken from another, which signifieth meat, implying, that flattery is a base belly-god vice, whereby the flatterer becomes a slave to every body's humour for a piece of bread: and for his freedom from this vice, he appealeth to their own knowledge, who might easily judge of his words, whether they were flattering or not. 2. He used not "a cloak," or pretext, "of covetousness," that is, neither was he avowedly covetous, or inordinately desirous of worldly gain, neither did he make a scug, pretext, or cloak of piety, or of any laudable virtue to cover any such covetous desire, as the false apostles did, Rom. xvi. 18. And because men could not so well judge of his freedom from this sin as from the former, seeing it is usually hid under some specious pretext, therefore he appealeth unto God to judge, and bear witness, whether he spoke truth or not.

DOCTRINES.

1. The sin of flattery, at least when given way to and allowed, cannot consist with the grace of sincerity (as in no man, so much less) in a minister: where a man enslaveth himself to please the sinful humours of people, and upon any terms

not to irritate them, he will not spare to wrest the truth of God to make it subservient to his base design by strengthening the hands of the wicked and promising him life, Ezek. xiii. 22, for Paul denieth that he used flattering words, as inconsistent with that sincerity formerly spoken of, which appears by the causal particle "for:" "For neither at any time used we flattering words."

2. Though flatterers be deep dissemblers, and bend their wit to make all men believe they respect and love them, when they but seek to prey upon them, Prov. xxix. 5, yet a man of understanding will easily discern them: and it argues either great stupidity, or blind self-love, in the man who, when he is flattered to his face, knoweth it not, but taketh foulest flatteries for real praises: for while he appealeth to themselves to judge if he used flattering words, he implieth they might easily have discerned his flattery, if he had been guilty of it: "For neither used we flattering words, as ye know."

3. There is not any sin more unbecoming to, nor inconsistent with sincerity in, a minister, than the sin of covetousness. The man who is enslaved to it will make his gain of all things, if it were by making merchandise of Christ himself, Matt. xxvi. 15, of truth, 1 Tim. vi. 10, and of a good conscience, Micah ii. 2; for Paul doth clear himself of covetousness, as inconsistent with that sincerity formerly spoken of: "For neither used I a cloak of covetousness."

4. The sins of flattery and covetousness go off together. The covetous wretch is of such a servile temper, as to make his tongue a trumpet to sound out the praises of all by whom he may have the least advantage, even though he know there be no real worth in the person whom he so commends; for Paul insinuates so much while he purgeth himself from both these vices jointly: "For neither at any time used we flattering words, nor a cloak of covetousness."

5. As foulest sins have oftentimes fair pretences, so there is not any sin that folk desire more to keep under a cover than the sin of covetousness. It is so base a sin, that though it have many favourers because of the advantage it bringeth with it, yet no man doth willingly seem to be guilty of it, or is content to be upbraided with it; for he saith not, he used not covetousness, but "a cloak of covetousness," because it is often coloured over with some pretext.

6. Though fair pretences may cover foulest sins from the eyes of men, yet not from the eyes of God, in whose sight all things are naked and uncovered; he not only perceives the sin which lieth hid from man under a specious pretext, but doth so much the more detest it that it dare disguise itself and appear in a pious dress; for his appealing unto God to judge if he used a cloak of covetousness, implieth that no cloak or pretext could hide his sin from the eye of God: "God is witness."

7. That Christians under the New Testament may take an oath; and upon what conditions, see Gal. i. 20, Doct. 3: "For God is witness," is the form of an oath. See the exposition of Gal. i. 20.

you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

He doth here remove another vice from himself and his ministry, to wit, his seeking of glory; whereby is meant, 1. more generally his affecting even of that glory and respect which was due unto him. And, 2. more particularly, which agreeth best with the latter part of the verse, a rigid exacting of honourable maintenance, which goeth under the name of "glory," because it was a just testimony of his honour and dignity, and an acknowledgment of his superiority over the people, Heb. vii. 4. And first, that he may purge himself both from ambition and greediness, he denieth that he was guilty of seeking glory, in either of those respects, whether from them or from any other, while he was with them; for though he received maintenance from the Philipians, even while he was at Thessalonica, yet he did not rigidly nor covetously urge it, Phil. iv. 16, 17. Next, he amplifieth his freedom from those two vices by this, that as to the point, especially, of his not pressing upon them for honourable maintenance, he did thereby remit of his right, seeing "as an apostle of Christ," or by virtue of his apostolic office, he might have been "burdensome" and chargeable unto them, to wit, by exacting maintenance from them, for the same word is rendered "chargeable," and made use of in this sense, ver. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. As we are not bound to reject that lawful respect and reverence which is due to virtue, and to those who are indued with it, where we have the offer of it; so for a man to hunt after respect and esteem, as his main design, or to seek it eagerly, doth savour of vanity, and should be far, especially from a minister, as he would not be found in the least to seek himself more than God's honour and the good of souls; for he saith not, he did not receive glory, only he did not seek it: "Nor of men sought we glory."

2. The sin of covetousness consists not only in our seeking more of things worldly than we have a right unto, but sometimes also in a rigid exacting of that which is our right; and this especially in a minister, when his so doing may prove a stumbling-block unto others, and one way or other mar the progress of the gospel among the people; for though Paul had a right, as he here doth show, unto honourable maintenance, yet he did not exact it, lest it should have marred the gospel's progress, 1 Cor. ix. 12, and this he gives as an evidence of his freedom from covetousness: "Nor of men sought we glory, when we might have been burdensome."

3. That worldly maintenance is due from a people unto ministers, see Gal. vi. 6, Doct. 4; and here the apostle doth assert it, while he saith, "when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."

4. It is not enough to know what lawfully may be done, except we also consider what, in respect of circumstances, is convenient to be done. Circumstances do alter much the nature of an action, and make that which is in itself lawful to prove

VER. 6. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of

unlawful, at least inconvenient, and so sinful at such a time; for the apostle knew it was lawful to exact his maintenance, yet finding it was not convenient in that time and place, he doth forbear: "Nor of men sought we glory, when we might have been burdensome," &c.

VER. 7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

The apostle having already commended his ministerial carriage among them, by avowing his freedom from such vices as are inconsistent with that single-hearted sincerity which ought to be in a minister, he doth now begin to commend it further, by condescending upon some virtues, the exercise whereof was eminent in him. And first, in general, he sheweth that he was "gentle," that is, of a meek and amiable deportment, doing all duties towards them from a principle of love and delight, (as some derive the word in the original from another which signifieth delight,) and drawing them on to do what he required, not so much by rigid boasting and constraint, as by meek persuasion and word-speaking, (for the word comes from another which signifieth to speak;) and he saith he was "gentle among them," whereby he shows he carried himself not as a superior, but as an equal, as one of them, and to all of them, and in the midst of them, as the word signifieth. And in the latter part of the verse he illustrates this his gentleness and meekness, from the tender affection and care, not of a mercenary nurse, but a nursing mother, who demits herself to the meanest and basest of offices for the more warm and tender education of her children. The grounds of which similitude are in the following verses.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not enough that a minister of Christ abstain from such scandalous sins of flattery, greed, and ambition, as time-servers are guilty of; but he must also labour for the exercise of such virtues as may commend his ministry, and gain respect for him in people's consciences; for Paul, besides his freedom from such vices, doth show that his conversation was adorned with the exercise of several praiseworthy graces, in this and the following verses: "But we were gentle among you."

2. The Lord's ministers are not, under pretence of eschewing base flattery, to carry themselves too austere, retiredly, and much less indiscreetly: as they should not flatter men in any known sin, so neither censoriously carp at every small thing, wherein is no offence neither to God nor man; both of which extremities must be eschewed, and God's way, which lieth betwixt the two, followed. They should so please all men to edification, Rom. xv. 2, as to flatter no man in what is really sinful; they should so discountenance known sin in any man, 1 Tim. v. 20, as to be of an amiable, discreet, and gaining carriage towards all men; for Paul having cleared himself of base flattery, ver. 5, sheweth here that he was of a meek and amiable deportment among them: "But we were gentle among you."

3. So ticklish are people to be wrought upon in order to their spiritual good, that a minister who would prevail with them must study their humours, and set himself to digest many provocations, and to comply with their temper, yielding unto them all contentment in all things, so far as he safely may with a good conscience: he must even become all things to all men, that he may save some, 1 Cor. ix. 22; for Paul implieth that he did all this, while he saith, "we were gentle among you."

4. There is somewhat of tender affection, and of care and diligence, flowing from affection, in a nursing mother towards her own children, which is exemplary and cannot well be imitated by any other; and therefore mothers whom God hath made in all other respects fit to nurse their children themselves, should not, without some pressing necessity, deprive their little ones of their motherly care, by putting the charge of them upon another; for Paul implieth so much while being to set forth the height of his affection towards these Thessalonians, he doth use the similitude, not of a mercenary nurse, but of a nursing mother, as is clear from his calling the children whom she cherisheth her own: "Even as a nurse cherisheth her children."

5. It is not so much to be regarded what pieces of duty a minister doth discharge to a people, as with what affection and heart they are discharged by him; and a minister who would have his pains facilitated unto himself, and blessed unto the Lord's people, should labour to put on towards them bowels of compassion, and a kind of natural tenderness of loving affection, such as is in a father or mother towards their babes; or if there be any affection more tender than another, he should endeavour to put it on, and express it, in seeking after their spiritual good: for Paul's affection was such as is in a nursing mother towards her own children.

VER. 8. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

The apostle doth give, in this and the following verses, five grounds of the former similitude, all and every one of which doth prove his meek and amiable deportment among them, as being so many branches of it. And, 1. As the nursing mother, if she be but for a little time absent from her children, doth most vehemently long to see them, that she may give them the breasts and other food convenient for them; so Paul was affectionately desirous of them: it implies a vehement desire after them, and speaketh (as it seemeth) the ardency of desire he had, while he was busied with his handy labour, ver. 9, and they with theirs, to have the congregation again convened, that he might preach unto them. 2. As the nursing mother, when she comes to her children, hath an unspeakable delight to feed them with food convenient, and with her own blood now turned to milk; so Paul was "willing," or had such an inexpressible delight and pleasure (for

so the word signifieth) not only to feed them spiritually, and to impart the gospel to them by his preaching, but also for their thorough confirmation in the truths preached by him, to impart unto them, or for them, his very soul, that is, his life, (so called usually, 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, and xxvi. 21, because the presence of the soul in the body is the cause of life.) Now this gradation here used, from his imparting the gospel to the imparting of his life, implieth not that the gospel is of less value than a man's life, but that it is more difficult, and speaketh greater affection in any, to lay down his life for others, than to impart the gospel to them. 3. As the only reason which moveth the nursing mother to do all, is motherly affection to her children, and no hope of gain; so was it with Paul, even because they were "dear unto him," or beloved by him. The words so expounded hold out several pieces of a sweet frame of spirit most necessary for a minister; and, (1.) He should be so disposed as to be ever in a readiness to close with any opportunity that Providence doth offer for gaining of souls to God, yea, and to thirst after opportunities of that kind, when one way or other they are withheld; for thus was it with Paul; he did vehemently long to have the Lord's people convened, that he might preach to them: "So being affectionately desirous of you." (2.) Whatever he doth in the several duties of his calling, he should do it not of constraint, or with a kind of reluctancy, for the simple exoneration of his conscience, and to stop the mouths of those whom he feareth may otherwise challenge him, 1 Pet. v. 2, but from an inward principle of delight, and hearty good liking to his work; for Paul was acted from such a principle, "we were willing," or had an inexpressible delight and liking, as the word signifies, to have "imparted the gospel to you." (3.) The choice text wherein he should delight most to discourse and preach of, should be the glad tidings of salvation to lost sinners, through Jesus Christ a Redeemer: for so did Paul: "We were willing to have imparted to you the gospel," or the glad tidings of salvation, as the word doth signify. (4.) He should be forecasting what the faithful discharge of his message may cost him, what hazard, loss, or suffering, he may be put to for it, and resolving, come what may come, never to shrink from his duty; for Paul did forecast it might cost him his life, and resolveth to quit it: "We were willing to have imparted to you not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls." (5.) He should be so disposed as to be in a readiness to seal the truth preached by him with his blood, and thereby to confirm and strengthen the Lord's people in the faith of it, Phil. ii. 17, if God shall call him to it; for so was Paul "to have imparted unto you our own souls." (6.) He should labour to have the Lord's people so much endeared to him and beloved by him, that whatever he do unto them, or suffer for them, may flow from affection and love to them; for so it was with Paul: "We were willing to have imparted to you, because ye were dear unto us."

VER. 9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day

because we would not be chargeable unto you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Here is a fourth ground of the similitude, to wit, that as the mother, who is poor and destitute of her husband's help, doth labour night and day that she may have wherewith to sustain herself, and thereby enable her for sustaining of her children; so doth the apostle speak of his own diligence here, and thereby confirmeth what he spoke of his affection to them, ver. 8, as appears by the causal particle "for," while he saith they did remember, or at least might remember, first, more generally, his "labour" and "travail." The first word in the original expresseth labour unto weariness, and the second, labour after weariness; so that when his body was wearied, he did not give over, but made to work again. And next more particularly, 1. His incessant diligence in his labour: he laboured night and day, to wit, so much of that time as might be spared from his necessary refreshments by meat and sleep. 2. The matter of his labour, partly expressed in preaching the gospel, partly implied in his handy labour, by making tents to maintain himself, Acts xviii. 3. 3. The end why he did so labour, that he might not be chargeable nor burdensome, neither to the whole community, nor yet to the private estates of "any" particular person among them; and this, as it seems, because, for some reasons not mentioned, the success of the gospel would have been otherwise retarded among them, as it would have been at Corinth, if Paul had exacted stipend from them, 1 Cor. ix. 12; though it was not so in other churches, where Paul exacted his right, 2 Cor. xi. 8, Phil. iv. 14.

DOCTRINES.

1. Where there is entire and ardent love in the heart, either to God or man, it maketh any piece of service done unto them or for them, though otherwise never so burdensome, to be but light and easy; for because they were dear to him, ver. 8, therefore doth he willingly undergo no small labour and travail for them: "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail."

2. It is the duty of people to call to mind, and not to forget, the great pains and labour that ministers have been at for bringing about their spiritual good, that so they may not only be thankful to God, who hath stirred up any to lay their otherwise perishing condition so near to their heart, and acknowledge their obligation to instruments who have willingly spent themselves for their sake; but also may thereby learn to value the worth of any spiritual good which they have received, labour to maintain and improve it, seeing their enjoying of it hath been the fruit of so much diligence and pains; for Paul implieth it was their duty to remember, while he saith, "Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail."

3. It is the Lord's allowance and command, that men of most eminent parts and greatest esteem should demit themselves to the meanest and most toilsome of employments, for purchas-

ing a mean of livelihood and subsistence, rather than that they should close with any sinful course, or use unlawful means for that end; for here Paul, a great apostle, being straitened for a livelihood, doth "labour night and day," in that employment of making tents, Acts xviii. 3.

4. Though ministers are not to be entangled with the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. ii. 4, and ought to give themselves wholly to the duties of their calling, so as they be not turned aside from them by unnecessary diversions, 1 Tim. iv. 15; yet in ease of necessity and want of maintenance, otherwise occasioned either by the extreme poverty or profane unthankfulness of the people, he may use some handy labour to maintain himself and his family, 1 Tim. v. 8, and yet not cease from preaching the gospel; for Paul, a minister of the gospel, in this case of necessity, did "labour night and day," and "preached unto them the gospel of God."

5. There is no ground here, from Paul's practice, to establish popish works of supererogation, or good works, which, as they say, are not commanded, but done over and above duty; for Paul's abstaining from taking maintenance was no such work: it was his duty, in the present case, (however he had sufficient right to it otherwise, ver. 8,) seeing by taking of maintenance he would have retarded the gospel, and therewith the glory of God and spiritual good of his neighbour, 1 Cor. ix. 12, for promoting whereof he was bound by both tables of the law, Matt. xxii. 37, 39, to do whatever was in his power; and therefore in this case it was not a work over and above duty.

VER. 10. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:*

This verse may be taken as a fifth ground of the similitude, to this purpose, that as the godly nursing mother doth not only nourish her children with milk and other meat, but also endeavours to live among them christianly, that their tender age be not corrupted, but rather edified by her good example; so Paul did not only feed the Thessalonians spiritually by preaching the gospel, but also made his Christian life and holy practice shine before them, while he behaved himself holily as to God in the duties of worship, and justly as to men, and in all his dealing with men, and (which followeth upon the former) unblameably or without complaint, so as (though God might justly tax him, 1 John i. 8, yet) man could show no reason for which to blame him: and he saith, he behaved himself thus "among those that believe;" the word may be rendered, "to those that believe;" implying that in his leading a holy life, next to God's glory he had respect to their good, that they might be edified by his good example. And for the truth of all this, he appealeth both unto themselves and God as witnesses—to them, as witnesses of his outward conversion, and to God, as witness of his inward sincerity.

DOCTRINES.

1. As it is the duty of all, and especially of

ministers unto their flocks, to walk before them in the good example of a holy life, otherwise they cannot choose but destroy more by their unministerial walking than they can build up and edify by their most excellent and orthodox preaching; so it is a singular mercy unto a people when God gives them such a minister, as even his very life and carriage doth preach unto them; for Paul's life was thus exemplary for piety before the Thessalonians, and he doth speak of it as a mercy from God unto believers among them: "Ye are witnesses," saith he, "how holily we behaved ourselves among you," or, "to you that believe," implying that his living so was much for their behoof; and he saith, "how holily," to show his carriage was singularly and eminently holy, and not according to the ordinary strain only.

2. Then is the life of a Christian, and especially of a Christian minister, such as it ought, when he hath respect to all the commandments, as well to those of the first table, by living holily to God, as of the second, by living justly towards men; for so did Paul: "How holily and justly we behaved ourselves."

3. It concerneth all men, and chiefly ministers, to carry themselves unblameably, and so as neither men have just reason to complain of them, nor they be too querulous and much in complaining of their own lot measured out unto them by God, or of every unkindness they may receive from the people of their charge; there being no rank of people which hath the eyes of more upon them, and whose escapes do more incapacitate them to do good in their station, and whom the Lord doth more earnestly call to the exercise of patience, without all seeming to repine, than those of the ministry; for the word in the original rendered "unblameable," doth signify "without complaint," and that both in an active and passive sense, that is, so that we do not much complain of others, and that others have not reason to complain of us: "How unblameably we behaved ourselves."

4. No man may need to expect he can so walk as that none complain of him, or be displeased with him; it is sufficient for a good man in order to his peace, that he do so behave himself as he give no occasion of complaint unto any, and that those who are really gracious do approve of him; but as for those who are yet in their unrenewed state, a man may expect that the more christianly he doth walk, he shall be reproached the more and spoken evil of by such, 1 Pet. iii. 16: for taking the words as they are here rendered, "among you that believe," Paul doth thereby imply, he was not free of blame from all, but only from believers among them.

5. That a man do live a truly pious and Christian life, it is not sufficient that he discharge all the external duties of the first and second table, with such exactness that the sharpest sighted of men cannot justly tax him; but he must also make conscience of inward and spiritual duties, and that he do what he doth in single-hearted sincerity, from such motives, and for such ends, as God approveth, and whereof only God himself is witness, otherwise the more that a man do in the external duty he is the more refined and self-

deceiving hypocrite: for Paul made conscience both of external and internal duties, as it appeareth from his taking men to witness of the former, and God to witness of the latter: "Ye are witnesses, and God also," &c.

VER. 11. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

He doth here prove that his life was such among them as he presently spoke of, and thereby shows somewhat further of that laudable and praiseworthy ministerial carriage which he had among them, for the truth whereof he appealeth also to their own knowledge and conscience; how that as a father (whose office is to instruct his children being come to age, Gen. xviii. 19.) he made application of the doctrine delivered by him unto every one of them in particular, by exhorting some to duty, to wit, seriously and with much entreaty, as the word doth signify, by comforting others under their outward crosses or inward sad exercises, and in order hereto by speaking lovingly and affectionately unto them, as the word doth signify, and by charging or obtesting others, and that with most severe commination of terrible judgments, as the word doth usually imply.

DOCTRINES.

1. The most exact touchstone whereby to try the real soundness of any man's holiness, is to judge him by what he is in the duties of his particular station; if so he not only discharge the common duties which are incumbent to every Christian of whatsoever calling, but also make conscience of those particular duties unto which he is in a peculiar manner obliged, as a man set in such a station, whether as a magistrate, or minister, or master, or servant, &c.; for Paul doth mention his diligence in the several duties of his particular calling as a minister, for an evidence that his life was holy, just and unblameable, while he saith immediately after the former purpose, "as you know how we exhorted," &c.

2. As a Christian, and especially a minister, may sometimes speak to the commendation of his own carriage, and thereby do God good service, 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4, &c.; so Christian prudence should teach him to single out those things especially for the matter of his own commendation, for which he knoweth he is already approved and commended unto people's own consciences: for Paul doth commend his own ministerial carriage from such things most, as appeareth by his reiterated appeals to their own consciences, for bearing witness to the truth of what he saith, and here he appealeth again: "As you know," saith he.

3. As the chief piece of a minister's work is to make pertinent application of general truths unto the particular cases of the Lord's people; so because the case of all is not one and the same, but diverse, therefore he must, chiefly in the applicatory part of his work, cut and divide the word aright, 2 Tim. ii. 15; not by speaking unto all the same things, and alike, but assigning unto every

man his own convenient portion, by exhorting the more tractable, comforting the afflicted, and by obtesting and charging under all highest pain such as are more refractory and obstinate: for so doth Paul; "Ye know," saith he, "how we exhorted and comforted and charged."

4. It is not sufficient exoneration of a minister that he preach in public, and there make as particular application of general truths as in prudence he may; but because there are some things which it is not expedient to mention in public, Eph. v. 12, and some who cannot be so well gained by taxing their sin in public, and others who shuffle by themselves the closest application that a minister in prudence can make in public, therefore he is also obliged to make application of and to dispense the word to every one in private, severally and apart, so far as he may without appearance of evil, chap. v. 22, or wasting the time which should of necessity be spent in fitting him for and discharging of the public duties of his ministry, which he oweth unto all: for "Paul exhorted, comforted, and charged every one of them."

5. The minister of Christ should so behave himself with meekness and gentleness, as that he do not by an excess of those weaken his ministerial gravity, authority, and respect; a mixture of both is an excellent composition, which of any other doth most besem a minister: for Paul having shown that for gentleness he was a nursing mother, ver. 7, &c., he declareth here, that for authority and gravity he was a father: "As a father doth his children," &c.

VER. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Here is, first, what he exhorted them to, even to walk worthy of the Lord, not as if they could have demerited his favour, which is free, Rom. xi. 6, but that they might so walk, as to resemble him in what concerned their duty, 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. As a child is said to be worthy of such a father, when he imitateth him; and so as their life might be accounted worthy to be taken notice of by him, when they with all their actions should come to stand and be judged in his sight. Next, there is a reason to enforce this walk, in a description of God, from his gracious act of calling them to partake, not only of his kingdom of grace here, but also of glory hereafter.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Christians are not called to idleness, or to stand still doing nothing, but to walk and make progress; so the rule by which they ought to walk is not their own corrupt wit, nor yet the approbation or example of men, but that excellent pattern of divine properties and virtues, which Scripture ascribeth to God, and are held forth to be imitated by us, in so far as our duty is expressed by them: for Paul says they were called to walk worthy of the Lord.

2. Though there is no walk attended with such real profit, credit, or comfort, as our walking worthy of the Lord, and labouring to resemble

him; yet so backward are we to the way, so apt to be discouraged in it, so resolute are men by nature never to own it, that there must be no small work before we condescend to enter it; yea, the godly themselves do need a sharp spur to pouse [push] them forward, to keep them from fainting in it, or turning away from it: for Paul saw it needful to exhort, comfort, and charge even those whom God had already called, that they "would walk worthy of God."

3. As none can walk worthy of God but those who are effectually called, all others being dead and destitute of any principle of spiritual life and motion; so then do we improve those excellent privileges which follow upon effectual calling, aright, when we do not turn grace unto wantonness, but look on all our gracious receipts as so many engagements and incitements unto duty: for he supposeth they were called, and draweth an argument from their calling, and those gracious privileges which follow on it, to make them walk worthy of God: "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you," saith he, "to his kingdom and glory."

4. As there is an inseparable connexion betwixt a man's being a kindly subject of God's kingdom of grace here, and his partaking of glory hereafter; so there is not any thing of greater force to make a man walk worthy of God, by leading a holy life, than his well-grounded faith and hope of glory to be enjoyed in heaven: the man who looketh to be in heaven for ever, cannot choose but have his conversation in heaven, and inure himself somewhat to the custom and manners of that country where he intends to live eternally: for Paul makes the partaking of God's glory to follow necessarily upon reception to his kingdom, and both an argument to make them "walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

VER. 13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

The apostle having already set forth his own ministerial carriage, doth now (in further prosecution of his main scope, which is to incite them unto constancy) put them in mind of the success of his ministry among them, and thereby confirmeth that his entrance unto them was not in vain, as to the third thing which I showed on ver. 1, was pointed at by that expression. And, first, he expresseth his success among them briefly, while he sheweth, that incessantly, or, at all times, when occasion offered and God required, he made conscience of thanksgiving to God for the work of their effectual calling by his ministry, implied in the expression "for this cause," which relates to the close of ver. 12, even because God had called them to his kingdom and glory. And next he proves they were effectually called, and thereby doth more fully express the success of his ministry, by showing, 1. They had heard the word of God preached by him atten-

tively. 2. They received it being heard, or did take it to their second consideration whether it was the word of God or not; for so the word rendered "received" in the former part of the verse, doth imply, even to receive what is spoken in order to the trial of what truth is in it. 3. After trial they found, and were persuaded, that it was no human invention, but the truth of God: and here Paul inserts in a parenthesis, that it is so indeed, and consequently, that they were not mistaken in their persuasion. 4. They did receive and embrace it as such, for the word rendered "received" in the second place, differs in the original from the former, and signifieth so to receive, as with the heart and by faith to embrace what after trial hath been found to be truth. 5. The word being thus received did work effectually, in believers among them, a gracious and real change from sin to holiness of life, as the fruit of the word is set forth, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. The word in the original signifieth to work with a kind of irresistible efficacy.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord doth usually bless with success the pains of those ministers whose life and conversation doth prove exemplary for piety unto the flock, and an ornament unto the gospel which they preach: for Paul's pains, whose life and conversation was such, as is formerly held forth, were blessed with that measure of success among the Thessalonians, as he seeth reason to thank the Lord for it: "For this cause also thank we God."

2. As a minister may sometimes reflect with joy upon the fruit of his labours, among the Lord's people: so he should beware in so doing to sacrifice unto his own drag and net, 1 Cor. xv. 10, but ought to ascribe the praise of all his success unto God, who alone doth teach his people to profit, Isa. xlviii. 17, for Paul reflecteth upon his success with thanksgiving to God: "For this cause also thank we God."

3. Though it be matter of thanksgiving to God from a minister, that he himself hath obtained grace to discharge his duty faithfully, whatever be his success among a people, seeing in that case he is always a sweet savour unto God, 2 Cor. ii. 15, yet a tender-hearted servant of Christ doth never find his heart so much enlarged in this duty of thanksgiving, and all restraints so fully taken off which might discourage him in it, as when the Lord is pleased to bless his faithful diligence with fruit and success among the people of his charge: for Paul doth then find himself enlarged most to this duty, when his assiduous pains did get an answerable return of fruitfulness: "For this cause also thank we God."

4. It is a great encouragement, whether for ministers or private Christians, to bear burden by prayer and thanksgiving unto God with and for others, of whom it may be in charity presumed that they are dealing earnestly with God for themselves: for, he saith, "we also thank God." The particle "also" implies, they themselves were making conscience of this duty, and therefore he and his associates did discharge it the more heartily. cc

5. Our hearts should be disposed to, and kept in such a frame for duties of God's immediate worship, and especially for speaking to God in prayer or praise, that whenever occasion is offered, and the Lord doth call us to it, we may be always in a readiness to close with it; for Paul did thank God without ceasing, that is, he was always ready for it, and when occasion offered did go about it.

6. The scripture in hand doth point at some steps, wherein people must walk, who would have the gospel blessed with success upon them.

(1.) As the word of God, and chiefly the gospel preached by sent ministers, is the ordinary means of converting sinners to God; so they who would be converted by it must lend an attentive ear to hear it, and carefully wait upon such occasions of hearing it as God doth offer: for Paul speaking of the means of their conversion and fruitfulness, saith, "the word of God which ye heard of us."

(2.) They must seriously ponder and meditate upon the word heard, and especially bring it to the proof, whether it be the word of God or not, otherwise bare hearing cannot profit: for, saith he, "ye received the word which ye heard of us."

(3.) As the word of God delivered by his sent ministers doth still remain God's word, speak it who will, Matt. xxiii. 2, 3, or let men think of it what they will, Ezek. ii. 4, 5, the nature of the word is nothing altered: so the man who would have the word blessed with success unto him, must labour to settle himself in this persuasion, that the word delivered from Scripture is the word of the eternal God: and, indeed, after an accurate search, it will be found to be so, by the consent of all its parts, though written at divers times and several hands, by the fulfilling of its prophecies, the majesty and simplicity of its style, and the wonderful efficacy of it in changing men's hearts, the malice of Satan against it in all ages, and yet the Lord's wonderful preserving of it, &c.; for Paul affirms it to be God's word, and that they after search had found it to be so: "Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God."

(4.) When a man is thus persuaded that the word delivered from Scripture is no human invention, but the word of God, he may receive and entertain it as his word, trembling at threatenings, Isa. lxvi. 2, rejoicing at and embracing promises, Heb. xi. 13, yielding obedience to precepts, Acts iv. 6, and submitting with patience to sharpest reproofs, 1 Sam. iii. 18, for that is to receive the word as God's word, and such a receiving is the ordinary consequent of the forementioned persuasion: for they being persuaded it was God's word, did receive and by faith embrace it: "Ye received it," saith he, "not as the word of man, but as the word of God."

(5.) When a man hath thus received and embraced the word, he must labour to prove his so doing, by making it appear that the word hath wrought effectually, and over the belly of all impediments, a mighty and gracious change in him from sin to holiness: and the word so received by faith is always attended with such efficacy in those who receive it: it is the power of misbelief in hearers, which maketh so much preaching to so little purpose: for, saith he,

"which," to wit, the word so received, "effectually worketh also," not in all, "but in you that believe."

VER. 14. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

He proveth what he spoke of the success of his ministry, and efficacy of the word among them, from their constancy and patience under sharp sufferings for truth; which, for their encouragement and comfort, he doth set forth under a comparison of likes or equals, to this sense, that they were followers or made conform to the Christian churches in Judea, here called the churches in Judea which are in Christ, who are thereby distinguished from the Jewish synagogues, who held themselves for churches of God, but rejected Christ: the ground of which conformity and likeness he sheweth did lie in this, that they, the Christian church at Thessalonica, had for the same truth endured and suffered the like evils and hardships, and with the same constancy and courage, from their own countrymen and fellow citizens, even as the Christian Jews had endured and suffered from the obdured Jews at home in Judea, Heb. x. 32—34.

DOCTRINES.

1. So effectual and powerful in working is the word of truth, that it makes the embracers of it endure the greatest hardships and sharpest sufferings for love to it, rather than to deny it a testimony when God calls for it: for he gives this as an instance of the efficacy of the word, that they "became followers of the churches of God" in suffering for truth.

2. There is not a more convincing evidence that the word of God is received as it ought, and of its supernatural efficacy in those who do receive it, than that it works a conformity in them with others in that which is good, and especially in bearing afflictions and sufferings for truth with Christian courage and patience, as they ought: for among all others, he pitcheth on this one evidence, that they had received the word aright, and that it had wrought effectually in them, even that they became followers of the churches of God, in their courageous and Christian carriage, under suffering for truth's sake.

3. As every error and imperfection in a church doth not presently unchurch them, nor provoke the Lord to withdraw his special and powerful influence, which is necessary for actuating the graces of his Spirit in them, and for making them fruitful in good works: so we ought diligently to distinguish the sinful failings and praiseworthy practices, both of persons and churches, that we neither imitate them in what is evil, nor yet, under a pretence of hatred to their evil, neglect to follow and imitate those things in them which are truly good: for though the Christian churches in Judea were in some things extremely tenacious of the ceremonial law now abolished, Acts xxi., yet they got the name of

true churches, and were honoured of God to be eminent sufferers for truth, and the church at Thessalonica did imitate them in their Christian suffering, though not in their sinful failings: "Ye became followers of the churches of God in Judea, for ye have suffered like things."

4. It is no small encouragement and comfort to the Lord's people under a suffering lot, that nothing doth befall them but what is common to men, yea, to the best and choicest of God's saints and servants, and that the Lord doth try them with nothing but that wherein some of his eminent worthies have ridden the ford before them: for Paul comforts them under their sufferings from this, that they had the churches in Judea for their precedents, yea, and, as it is ver. 15, Christ himself, his prophets and apostles: "Ye became followers of the churches of God in Judea: for ye have suffered like things."

5. As it addeth no small weight unto a suffering lot, that those of our nearest relations are most instrumental in it; so such is the fury of a persecuting spirit, that when men are judicially given up of God unto it, they break all natural and civil bonds, and prove unnatural beasts and tigers towards those of their most near relations who dare not deny the truth which they do persecute: for the churches both in Judea and Thessalonica were persecuted by their countrymen, which made their sufferings the more weighty: the word signifieth men of one nation, tribe, or company.

VER. 15. Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

The apostle having occasionally mentioned the persecution raised by the Jews, in all places where they had power, against the gospel, doth see it necessary not only further to comfort those suffering Thessalonians, by showing that Christ and the prophets had formerly suffered, and they the apostles did presently suffer no less than they: but also to prevent their stumbling at the gospel upon this ground, that the Jews, who in former times were God's only people, did so much oppose it. Which he doth, first, by taking-off their deceiving vizard, or mask, of being God's only people, under which they lurked and made themselves terrible to all their opposites, and by making them appear in their own colours, while he reckoneth out seven horrid crimes, whereof the body of that people, made up of parents and children in several succeeding generations, were guilty: As, 1. They killed, with great barbarity and cruelty, as the word doth signify, Jesus Christ, who was the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. ii. 8, and their Lord, to whom they owed subjection and homage. 2. They killed with the same barbarity the holy prophets, called here "their own," because they were of their own nation, and sent

with a peculiar message to them. 3. They "persecuted," banished, and drove away, as the word doth signify, Paul and the rest of the apostles. 4. They pleased not God, they neither had his favour, nor cared much for it; their woful way displeased him exceedingly. 5. They were contrary, and enemies unto all men, to wit, in so far as they hindered the course of the gospel, by which alone salvation is brought to lost mankind, Tit. ii. 11; this is contained, ver. 15. Their sixth crime was their violent hindering, as the word rendered "forbidding" doth signify, the apostles to speak, or preach, to wit, the gospel, unto the Gentiles, and consequently obstructing, so far as in them lay, the salvation almost of all the world. The last crime with which they are charged is, that however they did not intend any such thing, yet by committing those and many other such mischiefs, they did "always," and without intermission "fill up their sins," that is, carry on their wickedness to such a measure and height, as God had decreed to permit them to come at, without stop or hindrance, before he did inflict deserved judgment. See the like phrase to this sense, Gen. xv. 6, Matt. xxiii. 32; and having thus reckoned out their crimes, he doth further prevent all stumbling at the gospel, that might arise from their opposition to it, by showing that as the wrath of God had already begun to seize upon them, by hardening them judicially in sin (for he speaks in the preterit time, to denote that this wrath was already begun:) so it should pursue and surprise them suddenly and unexpectedly, as the word rendered "come" doth imply, and that to the "uttermost," without all mitigation, or to the end, as the word in the original doth read, which speaks the continuance of their judgment until Jerusalem, wherein the great part of the Jews were at that time providentially assembled, was taken, sacked, and destroyed by the Romans; after which the Jews have hitherto been no more a people, but scattered abroad through the face of the earth. For confirming this sense of the words, see Dan. ix. 26, with Matt. xxiii. 38.

From ver. 15, learn, 1. As it doth much embitter a suffering lot, when those who are Satan's instruments in it do go disguised under a mask of piety and zeal for truth: so it is no less comfort and encouragement to Christ's suffering servants, when that deceiving mask is taken off their persecutors, and they are made to appear in their blackest colours, and to be what they really are, profane enemies to God, under a pretext of friendship to him: for, because it was one of the most bitter ingredients in all their sufferings, that they had their rise from the Jews, who were in reputation for God's only people, therefore doth Paul discover them to be but profane atheists: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus," &c.

2. It is a choice and excellent cordial to keep a Christian from fainting under his sharpest trials, to call to mind the sore sufferings of the Lord Christ, who did willingly, John x. 18, endure much more for us than we can endure for him, Rom. v. 6—8; and by his sufferings hath not only cast us a copy, 1 Pet. ii. 21, but also sanctified ours, and taken the gall and wormwood of deserved wrath out of our cup before we be

made to drink it, John xvi. 33 ; for Paul doth put them in mind of Christ's sufferings, thereby to hearten those Thessalonians under theirs: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus."

3. That the wise and holy Lord hath decreed to permit sin, and that God doth make man's sin turn about to his own glory and his people's good, doth noways excuse the sinner or make him guiltless; and that because he sinneth willingly, and not to fulfil the Lord's decree, whereof he is ignorant, Jer. xxiii. 18, or to promote that good intended by God, but to satisfy some one or other of his own sinful lusts, and to vent his spleen and enmity against the Lord, Isa. x. 7, &c.; for though it was determined before by God that Christ should die, Acts iv. 28, and though lost sinners could not otherwise be saved, Acts iv. 12, yet the actors and instruments in his death are here charged as horrid sinners in that act: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus."

4. Accession to sin, by counsel, procurement, or any other way, doth make the person who is so accessory guilty of the sin, as if he were an immediate actor of it: for though it was the Romans who were the immediate actors, both judge, Matt. xxvii. 2, 26, and executioners, Matt. xxvii. 27, in Christ's death, and not the Jews. John xviii. 31; yet because their malicious accusations, Luke xxiii. 10, and importunate entreaties with Pilate, Luke xxiii. 18, 21, did procure it, therefore are they here charged as guilty of it: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus."

5. There is no sin so old which is not (if not repented of and pardoned, Isa. xliii. 25,) in recent memory with God; for the Lord doth here remember that long ago by-past guiltiness in "killing their own prophets."

6. The sins of parents are imputed to children when children continue to walk in their fathers' steps, and that because they do in that case by their practice approve what their parents did, and in effect proclaim that if they had lived in the days of their fathers they would have done the same, Matt. xxiii. 29; for here the present generation of the Jews are charged with the sin of their parents, who killed the prophets, and that because they walked in their steps, by killing the Lord Jesus and persecuting the apostles: "Who killed their own prophets."

7. So ungrate is man, and such an enemy to his own mercies, that being left unto himself he will not fail, not only to refuse an offer of friendship and peace with God, but also to requite evil for good unto those who labour with them to accept it: and as it hath been the lot of God's public ministers, in all ages, to receive such a meeting from those to whom they are sent, so they ought to resolve to meet with such a requital yet: for though Christ the Lord, the prophets and apostles, did come to the Jews with that offer, yet they "both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us," saith Paul.

8. There are some sins, and especially enmity to God and his work, which often run as it were in a blood from parent to child through many generations, the Lord in justice so permitting and ordering, that he may visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, Exod. xx. 5, and punish

godless parents in their more godless posterity, Psal. cix. 13; for this sin became hereditary, and in a kind, transient from one generation to another among the Jews. The former generations "killed their own prophets," and the present hath "persecuted us," saith Paul.

9. As God is highly displeased with opposers and persecutors of a godly ministry, so a persecuting spirit, when men are given up unto it, in progress of time doth waste the conscience, eat up all tender respect to God and his service, and rendereth men in the end very atheists: for this follows upon their persecuting a sent ministry, "they please not God;" that is, God was not pleased with them, neither did they care to please him.

10. Where the fear of God is not, there cannot be due respect to man; and accordingly as men do loose the reins unto impiety against the Lord, so do they by little and little lose all sense of common humanity, until at last, if the Lord restrain not, they prove wholly barbarous, very Ishmaels, their hand against every man and every man's hand against them: for upon their not caring to please God, they became "contrary to all men."

From ver. 16, learn, 1. As the gospel findeth all men in a condition lost by nature, and is the only means appointed of God for bringing lost man unto a state of salvation by Christ, the attaining whereof should be the great end proposed by all who preach it; so there can be no such evidence of an hostile mind in any against all mankind, as to impede and forcibly forbid the preaching of this gospel, and thereby to seek the destruction, not only of the body, which other enemies rest satisfied with, but also of the immortal soul: for he gives this as an evidence of their enmity to all men, they did "forbid us," saith he, "to speak to the Gentiles;" and shows that the end of the doctrine of the gospel, and their aim in preaching it, was "that they might be saved."

2. When men do wilfully reject the offer of salvation themselves, they do not usually rest until they first envy, and at last maliciously oppose, the embracing of it by others; if they do not enter themselves, neither will they suffer others: for the Jews who rejected Christ and the gospel themselves did forbid the apostles to "speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved."

3. When men do enter once a course of sin, and advance some steps in it, they cannot well retire, but, except the Lord restrain, or work a gracious change, one sin will make way for another, until the enslaved sinner be carried on to the greatest height of sin and wickedness that his utmost power and ability can reach: for the Jews being once engaged in a course of persecution, were never quiet, but sinned always; that is, made daily progress in wickedness "to fill up their sins away."

4. The providence of God prescribeth bounds, as unto all things, Eph. i. 11, so unto men's sins; there being a certain measure of sinning condescended upon by God, for nations, families, or persons, with whom God hath a controversy, beyond which they cannot pass, and to which they shall come before the Lord take course with

them; for the "filling up of their sins," here spoken of, is to be understood with respect had to that measure, condescended upon in God's secret decree and purpose: "To fill up their sins away."

5. That the Lord gives way unto godless sinners to run on in wickedness without control or check, doth come from no respect, but hatred to them; the Lord permitting them so to do, that their measure of sinning being the sooner filled up, the more unexpected wrath and destruction from the Lord may seize upon them: for the apostle shows that God's intention in giving way to all their former wickedness was "to fill up their sins away."

6. When the former sins of a person, family, or nation, have justly provoked the Lord in his wrath to harden them, and give them up judicially to satisfy their own hearts' lusts, and to follow, without control from him, whatever their godless, profane heart shall suggest to them; in such a case they prove remediless, and cannot choose but add sin to sin, until the Lord, one way or other, take some course with them: for so was it with the Jews; being given over of God, they "filled up their sin away, until wrath did come upon them to the uttermost."

7. The Lord doth keep a kind of proportion betwixt his wrath and the sins of an impenitent people, so that as they go on in sinning, and will not be impeded until they come to that height and measure, further than which they cannot go; so doth the Lord give way to his wrath, and makes it pursue them, until it destroy, consume, and make a full and final end of them: for thus was it with the Jews; they filled up their sin away, and God's "wrath came upon them to the uttermost," or, to the end.

8. The more eminent mercies and favours from God a people or person have lived under and enjoyed, the more signal judgments shall they be surprised with, in case of their continued abuse of, and ingratitude for, such excellent receipts: for the Lord, in the point of mercy and favour, dealt so with the Jews as he did not with any people, *Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20*; and because of their ingratitude they are made examples of God's wrath and judgment: "The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

VER. 17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

In the second part of the chapter, the apostle, in further pursuance of his main scope, which is to make them cleave unto the doctrine preached by him, doth relate unto them that solicitous care and most intimate affection he yet had of them and to them: and he falleth upon and prosecutes this purpose in a kind of apology for his absence from them; which he excuseth, first, from his earnest desire and purpose he had to see them before now. And, 1. he expresseth the cause of his earnest desire, to wit, his sudden removal; being driven away from them unexpectedly or in the instant of an hour, (as the words rendered

"for a short time," do well read, and is most agreeable to the history, *Acts xvii. 10*;) which his sudden removal occasioned him no less grief than that of a tender father when bereft of his orphan children, as the word rendered "taken from you," doth imply; whence it came to pass that though his bodily "presence" was by force and violence taken from them, yet he had left his "heart" and affection with them. Next he expresseth his desire and purpose itself to this sense, that the greater his grief was for his removal from them, his "endeavour" or resolute fervent purpose to see them, as the word implieth, together with his continued and active desire, as the word rendered "desire" doth signify, were so much the more vehement.

DOCTRINES.

1. A tender walker will labour to approve himself (though chiefly, *2 Tim. ii. 15*, yet) not only to God, by making conscience of every duty, but also to man; so that he cannot willingly lie under the suspicion of a neglected duty, but will labour, as he can have access, to clear himself of it: for Paul, conceiving they might have suspected he had sinfully neglected his duty in giving them a visit when he ought and might, he doth here clear himself of that neglect: "For we, brethren, being taken from you," &c.

2. The society, presence, and mutual fellowship of the Lord's people among themselves doth prove most sweet and advantageous, and especially the presence and fellowship of the flock is most acceptable unto a pastor whose pains the Lord hath blessed among them: for Paul's labours were blessed unto the Thessalonians, and therefore his absence from them was so grievous to him, and their presence so much desired by him: "But we being taken from you," &c.

3. It is therefore no little piece of Satan's work and business to mar the comfort of any such fellowship, not only by working strife, division, and prejudice among them while they are together, *Acts xv. 39*, but also by procuring, one way or other, their scattering into divers places, so that they cannot enjoy that mutual fellowship which gladly they would: for, saith Paul, "we were taken from you for a short time;" and this by Satan's procurement, as the following verse doth show.

4. So great delight hath a godly pastor to converse among his flock, that even necessitated absence from them, occasioned by persecution or other ways, will be grievous to him: so was it with Paul, whose necessitated removal from the Thessalonians was no less grievous than a father's removal from his destitute orphans, as the word implieth which is rendered "being taken from you."

5. It is the duty and wisdom of the Lord's people to make good use of the company and pains of godly and faithful ministers, seeing unexpectedly, in a moment and twinkling of an eye, they may be deprived of them: for Paul was taken from them "for a short time," or, in a short time, the instant of an hour, as the word doth read.

6. It is no small comfort unto the Lord's people under their saddest dissipation and scattering,

that however they cannot enjoy the bodily presence one of another, yet they may be present one with another in heart and affection, by minding one another's case, 2 Cor. vii. 3; by being suitably affected with it, Heb. xiii. 3; and not only praying to God for, but also by all lawful means procuring the good one of another, Col. iv. 12: for though Paul was taken from them "in presence," yet "not in heart."

7. Where desires after good are fervent, and such as they ought, they will be accompanied with fixed endeavours and purposes to get them accomplished; a desire that comes not up the length of an endeavour and purpose, is not worthy the name of a praiseworthy desire, but of the sluggard's raw and coldrife [cold-hearted] wish, Prov. xxi. 25; for Paul's great desire to see them, had endeavours or fixed purposes joined with it; "We endeavoured to see your face with great desire."

8. True grace and gracious affections of love, desire, hope, hatred, &c., the more they are opposed, they grow the more fervent, all contrary opposition being but as oil, or a little water cast upon a flame, which maketh it burn the more; for the more that Paul was stopped from coming to them, he "endeavoured the more abundantly to see their face with great desire."

VER. 18. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us.

He excuseth his absence, secondly, and doth further acquaint them with his solicitous care of them, by showing, first, that he and his associates, in whose name he doth write all along, but it seems especially he himself not only desired and purposed to give them a visit, but also did "once and again," that is, divers times, enterprise to fulfil his purpose, (for the word rendered "we would," must be taken for such an enterprise, and not for a naked desire, seeing he had such a desire always, and not only once and again;) and, secondly, by showing that Satan had hindered him to fulfil his enterprise, either by stirring up some to lay snares for him in the way, as Acts xxiii. 12, &c., or by raising new troubles in other churches, which required Paul's presence.

DOCTRINES.

1. It doth not sufficiently assail a man of neglect of duty, that he hath had some desire after it, and purposes to set about it, except those desires and purposes have been seconded by active and resolute enterprises, to get them fulfilled and performed; for Paul's desires and purposes were followed with such enterprises; wherefore "we would have come unto you."

2. Neither will it yet assail him that he hath once set about his duty, and upon the first discovery of an impediment and hinderance, presently retired, and cast by all further care of it; but where there is a fervent and honest desire after duty, there should be a renewing of enterprises and endeavours even after many disappointments, until either their desire be fulfilled,

or at least it be made to appear that the Lord hath otherwise determined, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, compared with 4; for Paul thinks it not sufficient to excuse his not coming, from this only that he had a fervent desire, and accordingly had enterprised once to come, but addeth, "we would have come to you once and again," that is, often.

3. The Lord, for good and wise reasons, may suffer his people so far to engage in a business, as once and again to enterprise it, having cleared their way for doing so much, and yet having tried their obedience in that far, afterwards cast in, or suffer to be cast in, some invincible stop or let to mar them from thoroughing it; in which case he accepts the will for the deed, and a serious enterprise for full performance, 1 Kings viii. 18, 19; for the Lord did clear Paul's way to attempt a voyage to Thessalonica often, and yet permitted Satan to lay in a stop: "We would have come once and again, but Satan hindered us."

4. It is the duty of saints to surcease from that which otherwise were a duty, when God doth call them to surcease from it, and consequently for the time doth make it no duty, either by giving them other more necessary work, or by making some inevitable hazard to their own life appear in that work, without any advantage, but with much prejudice to religion and the work of God; for Paul, upon Satan's casting in, through God's permission, some one or both of those impediments, he delays his voyage to Thessalonica, which otherwise was a duty: "We would have come once and again, but Satan hindered us."

5. As the child of God can no sooner enterprise that which is really good, but usually he doth as soon meet with some impediment; so whoever be the means or instruments for impeding us in the way of duty, the devil himself, through God's permission, is the prime author of that woful work, and all others do but fight under his banner; for though other means were doubtless accessory to Paul's stay, yet "Satan hindered us," saith he.

6. When once the godly are by Satan's craft or malice disjoined, or separate, whether in place, affection, or judgment, the same Satan doth bend his wit to hinder their reuniting and meeting together again in one, so great an enemy is he to that rich advantage which may be attained in and by the communion of saints; for saith Paul, "We would have come unto you, but Satan hindered us."

VER. 19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

He doth here give a reason of his desire, purpose, and frequently reiterated attempt to come and see them; and thereby doth also show how highly he esteemed of them, while by proposing a question, to show how pathetic he was in his affection to them, and by answering it himself, he declareth, first, they were his hope: Christ is indeed the only ground and foundation of our hope, 1 Tim. i. 1, by whose merit and interces-

sion we expect to obtain the good thing hoped for, chap. v. 9, 10, but they were only a strengthening encouragement to his hope, in so far as their conversion, by his ministry, was a speaking evidence, among other things, of his right to the promised reward of glory, Dan. xii. 3. And secondly, in the same sense, he calleth them his joy, because God's goodness to them, and bestowed on them by the means of his ministry, did already in part, and was more fully afterwards in heaven, to furnish him with matter of joy in God. And thirdly, his crown or ornament, and a crown of rejoicing or of glorious boasting, for which he had matter of glorying in Christ, and eternal rejoicing and glory, was to be freely recompensed to him by God. (See 2 Tim. iv. 8.) And therefore, in his answer to the question, he sheweth they were to be all those unto him, not so much in this life, as at Christ's second coming in the great day, whose sight and presence then should make the Thessalonians to be that to Paul which he expected from them.

DOCTRINES.

1. As we ought to speak and think of heaven and glory, not drily and warshly [lightly], but with an open mouth and enlarged heart, thereby to testify unto ourselves or others, that we believe the reality of what Scripture speaketh to that purpose : so the more we think and speak of that subject as we ought, our faith and sense thereof will grow, and rise by degrees unto a greater height : for Paul speaking of that heavenly glory, speaks affectionately of it, and his speech concerning it doth rise by degrees, while he mentioneth it first under the name of hope, next of joy, thirdly of a crown of rejoicing : "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?"

2. A faithful minister doth take an argument for his present or future rejoicing, not so much from the worth or dignity of the office of itself, as from the blessing of God upon the faithful employing of his talents in that office : for Paul doth promise unto himself matter of joy and rejoicing, not from this that he was an apostle or minister, but that they were gained to God by his ministry : for "what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye?"

3. Though unregenerate men be sometimes made use of by God as ministers, for converting of sinners, Matt. vii. 22, who already have their reward, because they do all they do to be seen of men, Matt. vi. 2; yet when a minister hath first made sure his own right to heaven through the blood of Christ, he may expect that the more his labours have been blessed of God for converting souls, he shall have the more of joy and glory at Christ's second coming : for Paul affirmeth that they, as being converted by his ministry, should bring some accession to his joy and rejoicing then, while he saith, "are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

4. As a minister may sometimes lawfully commend the good he seeth in people, so he should beware lest he so commend them as to flatter them, or cry them up as singular and above others, who are equally deserving : for the apostle in commending them as those by whom

he should have matter of joy, saith, "are not even ye?" the word may read, "are not also ye?" to wit, as other churches, so that he doth not make them singular.

5. It is the presence of Christ, a sight of him, and of interest in him by faith or sense, which maketh the presence of our graces, or of any good done by us, to afford us matter of comfort, joy or boasting, seeing it is he alone in whom the imperfections of our good are covered, 1 Cor. i. 30, and by whom that wrath and curse, which would have spoiled our mirth eternally, is quite removed, Gal. vi. 13; for he implieth it would be Christ's presence which should make them his joy, and crown, while he saith, "are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his second coming?"

6. Though the Lord Christ doth manifest himself in some measure unto his own, while they are here on earth, John xiv. 23, yet the full and thorough discovery of him is reserved until his second coming : we see him now but through a glass, but then face to face, with such a sight as shall make us thoroughly like him, 1 John iii. 2; even our vile bodies shall be transformed by him, and made like his own most glorious body, Phil. iii. 21; for he conjoineth Christ's presence and his second coming, because his presence shall shine most brightly then : "Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his second coming?"

VER. 20. For ye are our glory and joy.

He repeats, with an asseveration, what he presently showed they would serve for unto him at Christ's second coming, and this to declare both the certainty of the thing in itself, and the persuasion which he had of it, while he saith, "for," or "truly," as the word is sometimes rendered, "ye are our glory and joy."

Hence, learn, our faith and hope of interest in glory when it is attained, and especially when it is accompanied with some foretastings of the sweetness of it, should be not only once, but frequently, reacted and avowed, hereby to assure our hearts the more that our faith is real and no delusion, and consequently to fit us for rejecting all contrary temptations, when we shall be assaulted with them afterwards : for Paul doth again rejoicingly repeat the confidence he had of joy and glory at Christ's second coming, while he saith, "truly ye are our glory and joy."

CHAPTER III.

In the first part of this chapter, he doth further excuse his long absence, from that signal evidence of his affection, ver. 1, in sending Timotheus to confirm and comfort them, ver. 2, and having taken occasion hence to speak somewhat for their establishment against fainting under affliction, because affliction is the common lot of the godly, ver. 3, and he had forewarned them of all which had yet come, ver. 4, he repeateth

what he spoke of his sending Timotheus to prevent their defection, ver. 5.

In the second part of the chapter he doth further convince them of his ardent affection towards them, by showing what good tidings Timotheus had returned from them, ver. 6, and what effects they had produced in him, as comfort, ver. 7, 8, great joy, ver. 9, with assiduous and earnest prayer to God on their behalf, ver. 10.

In the third part of the chapter he breaks forth in a fervent prayer to God for them, seeking, first, a successful journey toward them, ver. 11. Secondly, growth and increase in the grace of love, ver. 12. Thirdly, establishment in holiness, with the pacifying of their hearts and consciences, ver. 13.

VER. 1. Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

The apostle, being yet further to excuse his long absence from them, and jointly therewith to express that solicitous care which he had of them, by his sending Timotheus unto them, he doth first in this verse express the cause inwardly moving him to send him, to wit, his fervent affection towards them, which was such that when he could not longer forbear, or, as the word signifieth, endure and suffer, to wit, the heavy weight of his earnest desire to see them, and of his perplexing fear concerning them, he thought good, or, as the word doth signify, had an inexpressible affection rather to be left alone in the midst of all his tribulations at Athens, (whither he was driven out of Berea by the fury of the Jews, Acts xvii. 15.) than that they should be longer destitute of one to supply his absence among them in their great need and hazard: whereby he did prefer their good in a manner to his own.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the hypocritical desires of wicked men after good are easily quenched, at the first appearance of real or apprehended difficulties, Prov. xxvi. 13, yet the sincere desires of the godly are not so; but the more they are opposed they are the more inflamed, and prove the more vehement: for Paul's sincere desire to see the Thessalonians grew so vehement, that he could not longer bear or endure the weight of it, and that because it was opposed, chap. ii. 18, as it appears by the illative particle "wherefore:" "Wherefore when we could not longer forbear."

2. There can be no more pressing weight upon a holy heart, than strong convictions of a duty necessary to be gone about by him for the church's good, and the Lord's seeming to stand in his way and to keep him up from the performance of it. This is such a weight that though the tender Christian may stand under it for a time, yet what through fear of some controversy which the Lord by crossing him may be pursuing against him, Numb. xx. 12, with Deut. iii. 25, 26; and what through grief for God's dishonour and the church's hurt, by reason

that the duty lieth undone, 1 Cor. iv. 18, 19; it proveth almost insupportable at length: and where it is thus, it argueth a tender frame of heart: for Paul being convinced it was his duty to visit this church, and being long impeded from it, doth look upon his disappointment as an unsupportable weight: "When we could not longer forbear," or endure and bear this weight.

3. Holy submission and patience under cross dispensations, by which the child of God is retarded in the way of duty, do no way abolish, but are well consistent with a fervent desire and earnest endeavour, by all lawful means to prosecute that duty wherein he is crossed: submission indeed removeth fretting impatience, Acts xxi. 14; but it quickeneth holy desires and diligence: for Paul, who, as he revered God in all cross dispensations, Phil. iv. 11, and so doubtless also in this, doth yet use his utmost diligence to compass the duty wherein he was crossed, and for that end he "thought good to be left at Athens alone," by sending Timotheus to supply his absence.

4. Where there is love unfeigned, and a sincere desire after the church's good, it will make the man endowed with it postpone his own good and comfort unto theirs, to wit, his own temporal good to their spiritual, 1 Cor. viii. 18, yea, his own conveniency to their necessity, both in things temporal and spiritual, as here Paul's sincere and ardent affection to their good, made him spoil himself of all good company, and willing "to be left at Athens alone."

5. As in all duties, so especially in duties of kindness to Christ's afflicted members, it is not so much to be attended what we do, as from what inward principle we are acted: and particularly, the more of cheerfulness and hearty affection goeth along with our duty, it is the more praiseworthy, and accepted both by God and man: and where there is sincere love, what will it make a man not do, endure, or cheerfully suffer for the good of the party loved? for Paul's love to them made him cheerfully and willingly deprive himself of all good company for their sake, and the worth and acceptableness of what he did for them lieth in this, that he did it willingly: "We thought good," saith he, or had an eager affection and good will, "to be left at Athens alone."

VER. 2. And sent Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

He doth next show what his fervent affection had moved him to do for them, and for what end he did it. He had sent Timotheus unto them; and that he might show his respect to them in the worth of him whom he had sent, he doth commend Timotheus from three epithets, as being, first, "a brother," the usual epithet of Christians, Acts xi. 29, because they are born of God, John xiii. their one Father in Christ, Eph. iv. 6. Secondly, a "minister of God," because of his office to preach the gospel, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Thirdly, Paul's "fellow-labourer," because he was

his joint-colleague "in the gospel," that is, in preaching the gospel. And the end why he did then send him was, first, to confirm or underprop them, as the word signifieth, to wit, lest they had been either drawn from the truth by deceitful reasonings, Col. ii. 8, or driven from it by force of persecution, Matt. x. 22. Secondly, to "comfort them," the word signifieth both to exhort and comfort, and he was sent for both, not only to comfort them under their sad sufferings, but also to exhort them unto constancy notwithstanding of them. Now the thing which he was mainly to confirm them in, and by exhortation to press upon them, is their "faith," that is, their firm assent and adhering to the truths of the gospel.

DOCTRINES.

1. Holy desire and fervent love to duty is most ingenious and witty to find out ways for discharging the duty, even when all ordinary access to it doth seem to be obstructed: for love and desire in Paul to confirm and comfort these Thessalonians in their need, makes him find out a way to do that by another, which he could no ways do himself: "And sent Timotheus to establish you."

2. Church-guides, or judicatories, who are charged with the oversight of several congregations, where they cannot in person officiate themselves, are not exonerated by sending forth unto the Lord's vineyard any who may be had, except they employ the fittest, and such of whom there are grounds of hope, that, through the Lord's help, he may carry on the work for which he is sent: for Paul not being able to go himself, sends not every one, but a man every way fitted for the work, even "Timotheus, a brother," &c.

3. As ministers, especially they who are of elder standing, and best known in the church, are bound to give their deserved testimony unto others of the Lord's servants, for gaining them respect and credit among the people of their charge; so then is a minister sufficiently qualified and worthy to be commended as a complete minister, when, first, he is a man in all appearance truly pious, for Paul commendeth Timothy from this, he was a "brother." Secondly, when he is painful and laborious about his Master's work: "Timotheus was a labourer." Thirdly, when he is a lover of unity, and entertaineth peace with others of his Master's servants, striving to work with them, Phil. i. 27, and not against them, in a way of his own separate from them: "Timotheus was a fellow-labourer." And, fourthly, when he is a lover of truth, as well as of peace, and studieth unity but in so far as it thwarteth not with virtue: for he is commended as "a fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ."

4. The office of an evangelist, among other things, (see upon Eph. iv. 11,) was to confirm and establish in the faith those churches which the apostles had already planted: for Timotheus, an evangelist, 2 Tim. iv. 5, was sent by Paul to confirm and establish this church "in the faith."

5. Such is Satan's enmity against the grace of faith, and so many are his onsets, what by one means, what by another to brangle it, Luke xxii. 31, 32, as knowing therein the believer's great

strength doth lay, 1 John v. 4, that even the strongest faith hath need of confirmation and establishment: and it is the godly man's wisdom and duty in trying times, to have a special care to guard his faith, as that grace which not only Satan striveth to shake most, but also upon the stability whereof the safety, strength, and vigour of his other graces depend much: for though Paul had praised their faith much, chap. i. 8, yet he sends here to confirm it, and it especially more than any other of their graces: "To establish you concerning your faith," saith he.

6. A singular means for strengthening faith under sad afflictions and trials, is for ministers to hold out, and people to embrace those excellent comforts, which the word of truth holds forth to the Lord's people in suffering times: our standing at a distance from, and questioning our interest in those, do breed discouragement and terror, and thereby make way for shameful fainting in duty, and foul defection from truth, Heb. xii. 13; for Timotheus was sent both "to establish and comfort them concerning their faith."

VER. 3. That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

He doth here show, first, the necessity at that time of his sending Timotheus to establish them, to wit, the prevention of an apparent hazard, lest any of them, because of Paul's or their own "afflictions," should have been drawn away by flattery, or shaken and "moved" from truth, like the tail of a dog following upon his master, as the word signifieth. Secondly, and because the same hazard did yet remain in part, he useth two arguments for their present establishment against fainting, either under his or their affliction. The first in this verse to this purpose, they "themselves knew," or were sufficiently instructed from the doctrine of the gospel, that all Christ's followers, Mark viii. 34, and chiefly the apostles, 1 Cor. iv. 9, were appointed, or (as the word is rendered, Luke ii. 34) set as a mark, at which the arrows of affliction and persecution are shot. Now they are thus appointed and set as a mark for trouble by God, both in his eternal counsel, Rom. viii. 29, and in his actual separating them from the world by converting grace, 1 Pet. ii. 21.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister's care should be extended towards all and every one of his charge, not only the great, the rich, the strong in grace, and eminent, but even to the poor, the outwardly base, contemptible, and to such as are but weak, even babes in Christ, Heb. v. 12, 13; and this as at all times, so especially when they are exercised with sharp trials and sore afflictions; for Paul's care was thus extended towards all at such a time, as is implied while he saith, "That no man shall be moved."

2. The Lord's faithful servants may be so much supported by grace under their saddest sufferings, as that their fear and care will be

more exercised towards others of the Lord's people, and about the possible sinful consequences of their trouble upon others, than any thing that doth concern themselves: for supposing the afflictions here spoken of to be Paul's own, as certainly his own are not excluded, we find him more afraid of their stumbling, than careful of himself: "That no man," saith he, "should be moved at these afflictions."

3. As Christians under afflictions for truth are in hazard to be shaken, brangled, and tossed to and fro with the wind of strong temptations, which take their rise from thence; so the ordinary temptations wherewith the tempter doth assault afflicted Christians, have much insinuating flattery in them, while he seemeth to commiserate their present case, and promiseth much contentment and ease if they step but a little aside from the way of duty for attaining to an outgate; for the word rendered "to be moved," signifieth to be shaken as a dog's tail, and drawn away by flattery: "That no man should be moved by these afflictions."

4. So much ought we to adore and reverence the Lord's supreme dominion and absolute providence, as presently without debate to stoop and embrace whatsoever lot is measured out unto us by it; for he persuades them to endure affliction without fainting, from this, that they and others were "appointed thereunto by God."

5. The faith of this, that the Lord hath firmly decreed to bring his followers by the way of the cross to their crown, and to make them first to suffer with Christ, before they reign with him, is an excellent remedy to stay and settle the believer against fainting and wavering under the sorest trouble; for this is the remedy prescribed here by Paul: "For we are appointed thereunto," saith he.

6. Scripture comforts under afflictions cannot support a man except he know them, and be acquainted with them, and ignorance is often the cause of our great impatience; for he makes their knowledge of God's appointment necessary in order to their drawing comfort from it: for saith he, "yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."

VER. 4. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

He confirmeth here what he said of their knowing that Christians are appointed and called to undergo a suffering lot, (as appeareth by the causal particle "for") and withal doth add a second argument to preserve them from fainting to this purpose; they themselves "knew," and could bear him witness, that when he was among them at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 1, &c., he had foretold them that both he and they were to meet with much tribulation from their oppressing persecutors, which prediction was now made out and verified by the event, and therefore there was no occasion for them to faint because of affliction, seeing they were so timeously forewarned of it.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of Christ's ministers to give timeous warning unto the Lord's people of trials and hardships, which they cannot choose but encounter in their Christian course, lest otherwise when they are surprised with unexpected trouble, they repent their undertaking and succumb, Mark xiv. 17; for Paul did timeously, and "when he was with them, foretell that they should suffer tribulation."

2. When the Lord's servants have an open door to preach the gospel unto a people, they ought to stir their time and instruct their hearers in all necessary truths, as not knowing how soon the door may be shut, and the present opportunity of doing good removed, Prov. xxvii. 4; for so did Paul; "when he was with them," he told them of all necessary truths, and of this in particular: "That we should suffer tribulation," saith he.

3. That the Lord's people have had timeous warning from the word of truth, of the troubles which will attend them in their Christian course, it ought in reason to keep them from fainting and stumbling at a cross when they meet with one: for this is the apostle's scope in this verse, to reason them up to a courageous frame of spirit under tribulation, because he had told them before of it.

4. As ministers ought to be circumspect in their predictions, foretelling nothing for certain but what the word of truth giveth ground to believe that it shall undoubtedly come to pass; lest otherwise, when the event doth not answer the prediction, their ministry be brought into contempt; so the fulfilling of such predictions doth strongly confirm the truth of the word, and underprop the believer in the faith of it, notwithstanding of any sad affliction or hardship he may be under for adhering to it; for Paul foretold nothing but what the event did verify, and from this that the event did answer his prediction, he doth persuade them not to faint, but to adhere to truth, although they were under present trouble for it; "We told you before that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass."

VER. 5. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

The apostle repeateth what he spoke, ver. 1 and 2, of his sending Timotheus, and expresseth a third end why he had sent him, (for other two were mentioned, ver. 2,) and it was, that he might "know their faith," or their constancy in the faith: and he closeth the verse by giving a reason why he desired so much to know their faith, to wit, a twofold fear; first, lest Satan, who is here called "the tempter," (as being that eminent tempter,) had taken occasion from their present affliction for truth, to "tempt" them one way or other to make defection from it; and secondly, lest they had yielded to the tempter, which is not expressed, but implied in that which

would have followed upon their defection, to wit, the loss of Paul's labour in preaching the gospel among them, which in that case would have been "in vain" and useless as to them, though not to himself, 2 Cor. ii. 13, 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. The care of an honest minister towards the people of his charge, doth extend itself not only to their first conversion, and the drawing them out of nature to a state of grace, but also to their perseverance in that state; for Paul, after he had been instrumental in converting the Thessalonians, doth yet remain solicitous about their perseverance: "And therefore I sent," saith he, "to know your faith."

2. A faithful minister doth not think himself exonerated, when he hath discharged his duty before the people, but will remain in a Christian manner solicitous of the success of his pains among the flock, when an hireling and time-server doth not much trouble himself about any such thing, John x. 12: for Paul, from this solicitous care, doth send "to know their faith," and the fruit of his labours among them.

3. There is a holy jealousy in Christian love, whereby though it believe the best, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, yet it feareth the worst, that all lawful means may be made use of to prevent it; for Paul from love doth fear, "lest the tempter had tempted them, and his labour be in vain."

4. As it is Satan's trade to tempt, and to tempt all men, good and bad, Luke xxii. 31; Eph. ii. 2; by all means, 2 Cor. xi. 3, at all times, 1 Pet. v. 8, and to all evil, 2 Thess. ii. 10; so he omitteth no occasion of exercising this his woful trade with advantage, 2 Cor. ii. 11, and more particularly he takes advantage of those cross dispensations, by which the Lord doth exercise his people, to make them cast at truth and piety; for Paul's fear, lest Satan had taken occasion from their trouble to tempt them, implieth, his usual way is to tempt on such an occasion: "Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you."

5. So much do the best of saints lie open to Satan's temptations, and so ready are they, if left to themselves, to yield when tempted, that a faithful minister will have reason to fear, to watch, to take heed to himself and the flock, so long as there is a tempter to tempt; for Paul doth fear lest the best among them had been tempted and succumbed: "Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you."

6. Though the pains and labour of a faithful minister cannot be in vain as to God, who doth always gain his intent, Isa. lv. 10, 11; nor yet as to the minister himself, whose reward is with the Lord, Isa. xlix. 4; yet as to the people who make not use of his pains, or make apostasy from that seeming good which once they attained by them, they are always in vain and to no good purpose, yea, a snare, Isa. xxviii. 13, and shall be for a testimony against them, Mark vi. 11; for Paul implieth so much as that if they had yielded to the tempter, and made apostasy from the faith, "his labour would have been in vain among them."

you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

In the second part of the chapter, the apostle being, in order to their further establishment in the truth, to express yet more of his fervent affection towards them, which was drawn out by Timotheus's return from them, he doth, first, in this verse show what Timotheus did report of them, when he had returned to Paul, being now at Corinth, as it appears from Acts xviii. 1, with 5, (though he was at Athens when he sent him, ver. 1;) and the sum of this report in general is called "good tidings," "he brought us good tidings." It is the same word in the original which signifieth to preach the gospel, because the thing reported was the fruit and effect of the gospel preached among them, the hearing whereof was as the preaching of it over again unto Paul. Secondly, those good tidings in particular were the report he made, 1. Of their faith, or of their stedfastness in the faith; 2. Of their "love," or sanctified practice, according to both tables of the law, flowing from faith, for love is the fulfilling of the law, Gal. vi. 2; 3. Of their special love and respect to Paul, made evident, 1. By their "good remembrance" of him, or that respectful mention which they made of his labour, diligence, and his whole ministerial carriage among them, and that "always" when they had occasion to speak of him. 2. By their earnest desire to see him: the word in the original signifieth such a desire as is, in a kind, impatient of delays. And lest he had seemed hereby to have reflected upon himself, who had so long delayed to satisfy their longing desire, he adds in the close, that his desire was no less ardent to see them, though he was hindered without any default of his, chap. ii. 18.

DOCTRINES.

1. An evangelist, one of the extraordinary officers in the New Testament, did herein, among other things, differ from an ordinary minister; he was not tied unto any charge, but being sent out by the apostles to water such churches as they had planted, (see ver. 2,) he did there remain, not constantly, but for a certain time, until the apostles should have further work for him elsewhere; for Timotheus, being sent to Thessalonica by Paul, did not reside there, but returned within a little to be disposed of by Paul as he thought good: "But now when Timotheus came from you unto us."

2. The Lord doth powerfully overrule and turn about the deepest designs of Satan against his work to the furtherance of it, as if they had been purposely contrived for that end; for Satan, by hindering Paul to go to Thessalonica, chap. ii. 18, got no advantage, but detriment, in so far as when Paul was converting souls to God, first at Athens, next at Corinth, Timotheus was confirming the church at Thessalonica: "When Timotheus came from you unto us," which supposeth he had been with them, and Satan could not hinder that.

VER. 6. But now when Timotheus came from

3. That the work of God's grace doth thrive among a people is good tidings from them, and such good tidings may be had even from persecuted Christians; for those were the tidings which Timotheus did report from this persecuted church, and they are called good tidings: "He brought us good tidings of your faith," &c.

4. The Lord's way with his work and people doth often soar so high above all probable means, that it disappoints and abundantly refutes our anxious, and sometimes misbelieving fears. So was it here, ver. 5; he feared they had yielded to the tempter in his absence from them at a time of so great need, but now he finds it was otherwise, the Lord having supplied the want of Paul by some other way: "He brought us good tidings of your faith and charity."

5. The best tidings which can be reported of any is, that he is a believer in Jesus Christ, a maintainer of charity and good works in his own practice, and one that accounteth highly of the faithful servants of Jesus Christ; and as all those three are always conjoined, so nothing almost worth the hearing can be reported of any, in whom all or any of those are wanting; for the good tidings which he reported were, "of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us," saith Paul.

6. Though none who are truly godly ought to be excluded from our special love, yet some may justly challenge a choice room in our affections above others, according to our special interest in them, and stricter tie unto them by nature, 1 Tim. v. 4; by cohabitation, 1 Tim. v. 8; by favours received from them, 1 Sam. xviii. 1; by their greater usefulness in the work of God, 2 Sam. xviii. 3; and because of a greater measure of God's grace shining in them: for they made evident their special love unto Paul beyond others, by their "good remembrance of him, and desire to see him."

7. Among all those who may justly claim, and do most easily obtain a choice room in the child of God his affections above others, a gracious minister whom the Lord hath made instrumental for his conversion is with the first; for Paul had been an instrument of their conversion, and therefore he shareth most deeply in their love: "And that ye have good remembrance of us," saith he.

8. As Christian love doth vent itself in speaking the best of the party loved, so it differeth much as to this effect, from popular applause; Christian love is a constant friend, but popular applause is most uncertain, Matt. xxi. 9, with xxvii. 22, 23; for herein did they evidence their Christian affection to Paul, "that they had good remembrance of him always."

9. Christian love, and especially that which is betwixt a faithful pastor and a gracious people of his charge, doth earnestly long to evidence itself in Christian fellowship, for the mutual comfort and spiritual advantage of both the parties, Rom. i. 11, 12; for so did their love to Paul, and his to them: "Desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you," saith he.

VER. 7. Therefore, brethren, we were comforted

over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith;

The apostle, in prosecution of the former scope, doth next show what effects these good tidings had wrought in him: they are in number four, the first whereof is comfort, expressed here to this purpose, that, whereas his mind was otherwise oppressed and perplexed with fear, ver. 5, he was now "comforted," or recreated over them, or by what he heard of them, and especially by their faith, or by the testimony which he heard of it. Which effect of comfort is heightened from this, that hereby the bitterness of all the "affliction" and "distress" of any sort, (for therefore is it expressed in two words,) whether by-past or present, which he had endured either with them, or after his removal from them, was wonderfully sweetened.

DOCTRINES.

1. Christian love doth make itself evident in a fellow feeling sympathy with the case of those to whom it is extended, and the more there is of love, there will be the more Christian sympathy; for, to evidence his ardent affection towards them, he sheweth how he sympathized with them; their affliction and apparent hazard of defection did perplex him, ver. 5, and good tidings from them did comfort him: "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted," saith he.

2. The Lord doth usually reward a tender frame of spirit in bearing burden with the church and people of God, in their hazard and afflicted case, by giving the person so disposed the more of comfort and soul-ravishing joy arising from the church's better case: those only who mourn with Zion are privileged to rejoice with her, Isa. lxvi. 10; for Paul was much afflicted with their hazard, ver. 5, and now he is much comforted, having heard of God's goodness to them under it: "We were comforted," and, ver. 8, "now we live."

3. The Lord doth usually exercise his dearest children with vicissitude of contrary affections, such as sorrow and joy, fear and freedom of mind; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, Psa. xxx. 6, and this because so impotent are we, that we cannot well carry a full measure of any one of those, for any length of time, without miscarrying one way or other, Psa. xxx. 6, 7, for Paul was so exercised; before he was perplexed, ver. 5, "but now he was comforted;" before he was as dead, but now "we live," saith he, ver. 8.

4. The believer's joy and comfort do not depend upon his freedom and actual deliverance from outward or inward trouble, but upon the Lord's comforting presence, who often takes occasion, from his kind dealing with others, to pour in upon the believer's spirit so full a measure of spiritual joy and comfort, that in a manner the bitterness of all his own trouble is forgot and swallowed up in the sweetness of it; for thus was it with Paul: "We were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress."

5. From this, that he expresseth only their faith as the rise of his comfort, though Timotheus

had reported of their other graces, see upon ver. 2, Doct. 5: "By your faith," saith he.

VER. 8. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

He doth here illustrate and confirm what he spoke of his comfort, as appeareth by the causal particle "for," and withal express the second effect of those glad tidings to this purpose, that "if," or "seeing," as the word may read, they "stood fast," or were courageously constant, as the word implieth, in the faith, whereby they were united to the Lord Christ, he was thereby made to live, that is, of a cheerful spirit, all things went with him according to his wish, for men are said in a sense to live when their concerns succeed according to their mind, and somewhat beyond their expectation, to the disappointment of their fear, Gen. xlv. 27.

DOCTRINES.

1. To rob a man of his comfort, and thereby to dead his spirits, and make his life bitter, is a kind of murder in God's esteem, for it takes away that which here the apostle doth call "life," to wit, the cheerfulness of his spirit, through the want whereof he did formerly look upon himself as dead; as is implied, while he saith, "for now we live."

2. As the good of an honest minister his pains amongst the Lord's people redounds to himself in some respect, and is not wholly reserved for him until afterwards, but is in part bestowed upon him even in this life, in so far, as not only his inward, but also his outward man is thereby bettered, his very natural spirits are thereby cheered, and consequently his strength preserved, and in an ordinary way his life prolonged: so his want of success, and growth of wickedness among the people of his charge, in despite of all his endeavours to the contrary, is sufficient to dead his spirits, to eat up his cheerfulness, and consequently cut his days; for the one of those doth follow upon the other, and the former is evidently implied, while Paul affirms that his life, or a cheerful frame of spirit, did flow from their constancy in the faith: "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."

VER. 9. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God,

He doth confirm and illustrate what he spoke, of his cheerful frame of spirit, and withal expresseth the third effect of those good tidings, to this purpose: he did "for their sake," or by their means, reap so much spiritual and sincere joy, (called here, "joy before God,") as he could never, in any way of thankfulness to God, express to the full, and as the cause required, his present sense of God's love, which had bestowed upon him so rich a mercy: for such questions as this, "What thanks can we render?" &c., do usually imply somewhat above expression, and cannot well be answered, Psal. lxxiv. 1, and cxix. 97.

DOCTRINES.

1. God's ordinary way of dealing with exercised Christians is, the lower they are brought under sad and weighty exercise, to make their comfort and joy, accompanying their outgate, so much the more to abound, (see 2 Cor. i. 5;) for Paul, who was pressed down, and brought so low with a twofold weight of desire and fear, that he could not longer forbear, ver. 5, is now as much exalted, that he cannot find words sufficient to express the sweetness of his case: he was "comforted," ver. 7, "he did live," ver. 8, and here he had joy, and all joy: "For all the joy wherewith we joy," saith he.

2. As the Lord doth sometimes furnish his people with more than ordinary matter of joy, and such as they cannot contain, but must express their sense thereof with cheerfulness and good will; so they ought and in some measure will have a watchful eye, that in all such expressions of joy, they vent nothing that is carnal, sinful, or unseemly, but what becometh such as are always in God's sight, and are especially then most narrowly marked and taken notice of by his all-seeing eye; for Paul having such matter of joy, while he is about to express it, doth set himself in God's sight: "For all the joy," saith he, "wherewith we joy before our God."

3. Whatever matter of joy a man may have, he cannot improve it, nor attain to the actual exercise of solid and spiritual joy, except his interest in God be in some measure cleared, whose reconciled face doth put such a ravishing lustre upon all our other mercies, as they draw out the heart actually to rejoice in them, or rather in God for them, (see Psal. iv. 6;) for though Paul had matter of joy from the former good tidings, yet he doth not actually rejoice until he close with God as his through Christ, as is implied, while he saith, "for all the joy wherewith we joy before our God."

4. Christian love, to those who are God's, doth give the person who loveth an interest in all the good things bestowed by God upon those whom he loveth, and a large share of all the joy and comfort which are occasioned by them; for Paul, to make evident his ardent affection to these Thessalonians, doth show that their merciful receipts did give him matter of all joy: "For all the joy," saith he, "wherewith we joyed for your sakes," that is, for God's mercies towards them, mentioned ver. 6.

5. Whoever are, or may be, the occasion of joy, by furnishing matter for it, yet a godly heart will not rest upon them, but look to the Lord above all, ascribing praise and thanksgiving to him who not only giveth the cause and occasion of joy, by making instruments to be that which they are, matter of joy and not of grief, Psal. xx. 9, but also doth give us to improve that matter of joy unto actual rejoicing, which otherwise we could not, Eccles. ii. 24; for Paul, though he had the matter of his joy furnished from the Thessalonians, yet he looks over them to God, and returns him thanksgiving for it: "What thanks can we render unto God for all our joy?" saith he.

6. As giving of thanks is all the rent which

either the Lord doth crave, or we can return unto him for favours received, so no thanksgiving of ours can be looked upon as an answerable return to the meanest of mercies, and especially a godly heart can never satisfy himself in the matter of his thankfulness to the Lord; he prizeth the mercy received so high, and seeth his thanks to be so feckless, that he judgeth all he can do of no value, and no ways answerable to what so rich mercy in God doth call for; for Paul seeth that thanksgiving was his due, but cannot satisfy himself in any thing he could do of that kind; as is implied while he saith, "What thanks can we render to God for all the joy?" &c.

VER. 10. Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Here is the fourth effect of those glad tidings upon Paul; he was thereby put to his prayers, which were, 1. Assiduous: the phrase, "night and day," implieth such an assiduity as admits of no other but necessary intermissions, Luke ii. 37: next, it was fervent and serious, so much is implied in his praying "exceedingly," or, as it is in the original, excessively, intimating fervency of affection. 3. The thing prayed for was, (1.) to see them, or to be present with them. (2.) That being with them, he might have occasion, by his preaching to them and conversing with them, to perfect, supply, and make up (as an instrument under God, 1 Cor. iii. 5,) what was lacking and wanting in their faith, whether in their understanding, as to their knowledge of or assent unto truths revealed; or in their will and affections, as to their embracing of and adherence unto that good thing held forth by those truths.

DOCTRINES.

1. There can be no such cause of thanksgiving in this life, but there will be also matter for prayer, and an incumbent necessity to go about that duty, there being always somewhat wanting to the best, and necessary to be had, Phil. iii. 12, and prayer being a prime mean appointed of God for obtaining of what we want, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. For though Paul had at this time such matter of thanksgiving, that he could not well express it, ver. 9, yet he is assiduous in prayer: "Night and day praying exceedingly."

2. Our prayers to God should be both assiduous and serious, the former without the latter being but vain babbling, condemned Matt. vi. 7, and the latter without the former but a violent, evanishing flash, to no purpose, condemned Isa. xxvi. 16: for his prayers had those two properties: "Night and day praying exceedingly," saith he.

3. There is a singular efficacy and aptness in a minister's presence and preaching, through the Lord's blessing, to beget, confirm, or carry on the work of grace in hearers, beyond what there is in his writings while he is absent. There is not only a more express promise of a blessing unto preaching, Rom. x. 17, but also there is nothing almost in a man whom God hath sent to gain souls, whether carriage, gesture, or counte-

nance, which the Lord doth not make subservient unto edification one way or other, 1 Cor. ix. 22; for therefore is it that Paul, not content with writing to them, doth so much desire to see their face, that "he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith."

4. As the faith of the best hath its own inlacks, and most eminent believers have need to pray, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke xvii. 5; so faith is preserved and increased in the use of those means by which it was begotten at first: it is begotten by ordinances, and especially by the word preached, and it is preserved and receiveth increase by ordinances and the public preaching of the word; for though Paul did highly commend their faith, chap. i. 3, yet somewhat was lacking to it, and he prayeth he may see them, that by preaching to them he might perfect that "which was lacking in their faith."

VER. 11. Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

The apostle having but made mention, ver. 10, of his usual practice in praying, doth here, in the third part of the chapter, break out in a most fervent and devout prayer, and thereby maketh way for the second principal part of this epistle, which beginneth chap. iv.; in which prayer there is, first, the party to whom he prayeth, "God himself," taken here personally for the first Person, therefore is it added, "Our Father;" and he is contradistinguished to Christ Jesus our Lord, the second Person, to whom also the apostle prayeth. Secondly, there is the matter prayed for, that all obstacles and impediments being removed, he might get a successful journey, and be directed by Providence, as in a right line, towards them, as the word in the original doth signify.

DOCTRINES.

1. So necessary, and of so universal use, is this duty of prayer, that our heart should be constantly kept in such a readiness to it, that whenever the least opportunity is offered, we may set about it; yea, and where a man is fervent in prayer, he will lay hold upon every occasion to break out in it; for Paul having but made mention of prayer, ver. 10, and seeing some necessity of praying presently, cannot contain himself, but sets about it: "Now God himself and our Father," &c.

2. That Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father, appeareth hence, that not only divine worship, but also divine properties, in overruling by his providence the affairs of men, are ascribed to him; for Paul doth pray unto him, and seeketh a successful journey from him: "Our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way."

3. Though the object of divine worship be but one and the same glorious God, Matt. iv. 10, and there is but one kind of divine worship, to wit, that which is supreme, and becometh this one infinite majesty of God, and therefore whatever person of the Godhead be expressly named in our prayers, the rest are not excluded, but included in that one, they being all three one only God,

the same in essence, 1 John v. 7; yet it is not only lawful, but also sometimes convenient, though not always necessary, to name expressly in our prayers the distinct persons, and especially Jesus Christ, the second Person, with the Father, thereby to strengthen our confidence for acceptation and an answer, seeing there is no access to the Father but by him, John xiv. 6; for Paul here doth expressly direct his prayer both to the Father and the Son: "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. The Lord's most powerful providence doth overrule the most malicious designs of Satan against his work and people, so that he could easily mar the prosecution of them, when at their greatest height, if he did not sometimes judge the contrary more convenient for his own glory and his people's good, Psa. lxxvi. 10; for Paul could not otherwise pray in faith unto God for a successful journey, when he knew Satan did ply his utmost to hinder it, chap. ii. 18: "Now God himself direct our way unto you," saith he.

5. Seeing it is not in man to direct his own way, Jer. x. 23, therefore he ought to wait and depend on God's direction for all his undertakings; and this both for light, that he may know what, when, and how he should do, Psa. xxvii. 11, and for strength to enable him for, and bear him through, against difficulties in the performance, Eph. iii. 16; for so doth Paul: "Now God himself direct our way unto you."

VER. 12. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you.

A second thing he prayed for is, that whether he came unto them or not, the "Lord" himself might supply his absence, by making them grow abundantly, and beyond all ordinary measure, (as the doubling of the word "increase" and "abound" doth imply,) in the grace and duties of love, first, "one to another," and amongst themselves who were Christians; next, generally "towards all men," even heathens. And in the close of the verse, he casts in one incitement to the exercise of this grace, from his own example and practice towards them.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the Lord doth usually work by ordinary means, yet we may not tie him absolutely to them, but under want of means ought to depend upon him to supply their lack; for Paul depends on God for making them grow in love, even though he himself should not come to them: "And the Lord make you to increase."

2. As not only the first beginnings, but also the growth and progress of grace do come from God, and therefore are to be sought from him by prayer: so we need not fear, while we plead with God for spiritual mercies, lest we exceed and seek too much: for Paul seeketh that he may make them grow abundantly, and beyond all ordinary measure: "And the Lord make you increase and abound."

3. As it should be a believer's aim to grow in grace, so he should labour in this study after growth, both to extend himself to the exercise of more graces, as is enjoined, 2 Pet. i. 5, and to better the exercise of one and the same grace, so as to grow more frequent, copious, and spiritual in it, as is enjoined, chap. v. 16, 17; for Paul's praying for growth shows, we should endeavour it, and the two words he useth to express this growth are made by some to differ thus, that the first may signify to increase in number, the second in heap or bulk: "Now the Lord make you to increase and abound in love."

4. As Christian love ought and will be mutual among real Christians, so it is not mercenary, nor doth extend itself unto those only from whom the Christian may expect a return of love again, but to others also, from whom nothing of that kind can be had, even to all men; and that because of God's command, Matt. v. 44, and that there is somewhat lovable in all, Rom. ii. 15, though abused and defaced by the most, Rom. i. 21, for he prayeth that they, being Christians, "may abound in love," first, "towards one another," and next, "towards all men."

5. A minister's own example, and sanctified practice, according to the truth he preacheth, is one of the strong inducements unto a people to give him obedience in what he prescribeth: and therefore though a profane man may preach to purpose, Matt. vii. 22, 23, yet his preaching is not usually so much accompanied with fruit and success, 1 Tim. iv. 16, for Paul allegeth his own practice, as an inducement: "Even as we do towards you," saith he.

VER. 13. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Here is a third thing prayed for, in order to which their growing in love was presently sought, as it appears from the word of connexion betwixt the verses: and it is, that thereby, as by one mean, the Lord might, first, confirm and establish them in holiness, so as they should not be easily moved, or driven from the solid practice of it. And next, that by both those, to wit, their growth in love, and stability in holiness, their hearts or consciences (so called, 1 John iii. 19, 20,) might be rendered blameless, or without complaint, as it may be well taken in an active sense; his meaning is, that their consciences may be pacified, yea, and absolved, and pass sentence in their favours, and this before the bar and tribunal of God their reconciled Father, the full accomplishment of which wish should be at Christ's second coming, when he shall come accompanied "with all his saints," or, as the original may read, his holy ones; that is, either his holy angels, 2 Thess. i. 7, or the holy souls of the saints departed, who shall come down with Christ, to be united and glorified with their bodies. See the same effect of pacifying the conscience ascribed to grown love, 1 John iii. 19, and iv. 18, and it is ascribed to love and holiness, as to that which doth evidence our interest in Christ's blood, John xiii.

35; by the only merit and worth whereof we have peace with God, Rom. v. 1.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though children, and those who are weak in grace, be tossed to and fro with every temptation, Eph. iv. 14, yet grown, and growing Christians, are not so easily shaken: growth in grace is accompanied with stability, both in truth and holiness: for Paul teacheth so much, while having prayed, ver. 12, for growth in grace, he addeth here, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness."

2. It concerneth a Christian much, by all means to endeavour that his heart and conscience may be without complaint, speak peace unto him and absolve him; seeing if a man's heart and conscience upon good ground condemn him, much more will God, who is greater than the heart, and whose deputy the conscience is, 1 John iii. 20: for Paul prayeth here that their hearts, or consciences, may be unblameable and without complaint.

3. As a man, in making his heart and conscience pass sentence upon his state and way, should sift himself in God's sight, and endeavour that his conscience pass such a sentence upon all, as he thinks God the Judge of all will pass; so in this inquiry and process, he should look upon God as a fatherly Judge, who will pass sentence as a Father, according to the covenant of grace, and not as a strict sin-pursuing Judge, according to the covenant of works: for he wishes that their hearts may be unblameable or without complaint before God, that is, when sifted as in his sight, and calleth him "our Father," to show in what relation he should be taken up.

4. Though it be the alone blood of Christ apprehended by faith that purifieth the conscience, and gives it ground to absolve and speak peace; seeing by it alone provoked justice is satisfied, and we are justified, whereupon our peace with God doth follow, Rom. v. 1; yet inherent holiness doth also quiet the conscience in its own order and way, to wit, though not meritoriously, and by way of satisfaction to the claim of justice, for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6; yet by way of evidence, and as a faithful witness of our undoubted interest in Christ, and right to his blood, 1 John iii. 14: for Paul prayeth that their hearts or consciences may be unblameable, without complaint, or pacified in holiness.

5. Though the meanest measure of sincere holiness be a sufficient evidence in itself of an interest in Christ, and consequently may quiet the conscience, Matt. v. 6, yet that a man may clearly discern this evidence, and get his conscience actually, and upon good ground, quiet by it, it is necessary that he grow in grace, and be established in holiness, otherwise his peace is more liable to be questioned and shaken by every new assault: for Paul ascribeth this effect of pacifying the conscience to growth in grace, and stability in holiness, while having prayed for their growing in grace, he addeth, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness."

6. However believers do enjoy much sweet peace, Rom. v. 1, and some clear evidences of a

right to Christ in their begun sanctification, even while they are here, Cant. vi. 3, yet the full accomplishment of their begun happiness is reserved until Christ's second coming: many things are wanting now, even to those who have most, 2 Cor. vi. 6, which shall be then made up: our holiness shall then be perfected, and we confirmed in it, our peace extended as a river, neither shall our consciences afterwards ever smite or accuse: for he sheweth the term, when we shall be fully established in holiness, and our consciences thoroughly pacified, shall be "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

CHAPTER IV.

THE apostle being, in the second principal part of this Epistle, until ver. 23 of chap. v., to press upon them the practice of a holy life, he doth in the first part of this chapter propose several exhortations to that purpose. The first is, to the study of holiness and sanctification in general, ver. 1, enforced, 1. From his manifold injunctions of this kind he had given them already, ver. 2. Secondly, it was the will of God that they should so walk, ver. 3. Next, the following exhortations do press their exercise of some particular virtues, and branches of that sanctification presently mentioned: as, first, the exercise of chastity, ver. 4, and abstinence from all uncleanness contrary to it, ver. 3, 5. Secondly, the exercise of justice and equity, in abstinence from all sort of oppression. And both these are enforced, because, first, otherwise God would plague them, ver. 6. Next from the end of their calling, to wit, their sanctification, ver. 7. Thirdly, their disobedience would be a despising of God, ver. 8. The third exhortation is to the exercise of brotherly love, which he presseth indirectly from their progress herein already, ver. 9, 10. And fourthly, he exhorts to quietness of spirit, opposite to idleness and curiosity, ver. 11. Because, first, of public honesty; secondly, of private utility, ver. 12.

In the second part of the chapter, he proposes several considerations to allay immoderate grief for the death of friends: as, first, their death is but a sleep, ver. 13. Secondly, they shall undoubtedly arise, ver. 14. Thirdly, they shall be in no worse case at Christ's second coming than the godly, who shall be then found alive, ver. 15; yea, they shall have the advantage of them, as being to be first raised, and before those, others shall be changed, ver. 16. Fourthly, after their resurrection the godly of both sorts shall meet together, and both of them with Christ. Fifthly, they shall never part again, ver. 17. And so he concludes, by pointing at the use which they were to make of all those considerations, ver. 18.

VER. 1. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought

to walk and to please God, *so* ye would abound more and more.

He doth here, and to ver. 3, propose and urge a general exhortation, which is a comprehensive sum of all the rest, which he is to press upon them afterward. And having made a transition from the preceding doctrine, by the word "furthermore," (implying, as the original beareth, there did somewhat yet remain necessary to be added,) he doth in the name and authority of "the Lord Jesus," and for his sake exhort them, and that both lovingly (as the word rendered, "beseech," implieth) and seriously, as his using two words to the same purpose doth import. And the thing unto which he exhorts them is, that according to the doctrine and injunctions they had formerly received of him, while he was with them, pointing out both the necessity and manner of such a walk and conversation, as might be acceptable unto and please the Lord, so they would abound, more and more, that is, supposing they had already entered this walk, (as is expressly affirmed, chap. i. ver. 3,) he would have them now to make continual progress, and in a manner to outstrip themselves by their future diligence. Besides what I have observed already upon the cohesion of the doctrinal and practical part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv. ver. 1, Doct. 1, 2, which is applicable here;

Learn, 1, the endeavours of others, by prayer or otherwise, to have us doing well, should not hinder, but rather further our own diligence and pains; and particularly our own prayers, or the prayers of others to God on our behalf, should be seconded by diligent use of means on our part, for attaining the good thing prayed for, otherwise we tempt the Lord by our prayers, as the sluggard, Prov. xxi. 25, and make the prayers of others wholly ineffectual, as to the bringing about of any good unto us, Psa. xxxv. 13: for Paul having prayed fervently, that the Lord would make them abound in grace, chap. iii. 12, he doth here press upon themselves to abound more and more, and because he prayed for it, therefore he would have them to endeavour it, as appears by the illative particle, "then," or therefore: "Furthermore then."

2. When a minister hath with greatest clearness and fulness explicated and laid open the doctrinal part of Christian religion, and the several articles of faith, he hath not yet absolved his task, until he press upon people's consciences the practice of piety and of the several duties of a holy life; and whatever a man be for knowledge, yet there is one thing, and the main thing lacking, so long as he knows not, or cares not, how to bring his knowledge into practice; his knowledge in that case is to no purpose, as not having attained the end for which it is given, Acts ii. 11, 12: for Paul having already instructed them in the doctrinal part of religion, and exhorted them to constancy in it, he looks upon somewhat yet wanting and necessary to be added, even the following directions to lead a holy life: "Furthermore then," or, "as to that which yet rests, we beseech you."

3. A minister, especially in pressing the prac-

tice of holy duties upon the people of his charge, should labour to be both affectionate and serious, so that neither his affection and respect unto them may mar his vehemency and fervour, in pressing home the point upon their conscience, nor yet his zeal and fervour make him omit any thing, whereby sanctified prudence might teach him to evidence his affection to them and respect of them, lest otherwise by exasperating their corruption he drive them further from their duty, instead of bringing them nearer to it: for Paul, while he presseth duty, doth not command imperiously, but entreats them meekly and affectionately, as the word rendered "beseech" implieth, and yet most seriously and fervently, he both "beseecheth and exhorteth."

4. A minister's meekness and lenity ought to be seasoned with some mixture of authority and due severity, lest otherwise his meekness be despised, and his ministry want an edge: for as Paul beseecheth them in lenity, so he obtests them "by the Lord Jesus," that is, in his name and authority, and for his sake.

5. Though good works, and a holy walk, be not necessary antecedents of justification, Rom. iv. 5, yet they are of necessity required in the person now justified, to wit, for making his calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10, for making evident the reality of his faith and interest in Christ, James ii. 18, for glorifying God, John xv. 8, for gaining of others, Matt. v. 16, for attaining the actual possession of life eternal, as the way to it, Heb. xii. 14, though not as a price to merit or buy it, Rom. vi. 23; for the word in the original, rendered "how ye ought to walk," doth signify how ye "must of necessity" walk.

6. That a man may walk as a Christian, and so as to please the Lord, he must take the revealed will of God, delivered by his prophets and apostles, and committed by them to sacred writ, for his guide, both in the matter and manner of his walk: for Paul teacheth so much, while he saith, that "as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye should abound;" now what they had received of him, to this purpose, by his preaching, he doth here commit the sum of it to writing.

7. Whatever be a man's walk and conversation for matter, or otherwise for manner, yet he walks not as a Christian, nor so as he can have any real or solid comfort in his walk, except he sincerely endeavour to please the Lord, by doing what he doth as service to him, Eph. vi. 6, 7; for Paul makes their endeavour to please God, a necessary ingredient in a Christian walk, while he saith, "how ye ought to walk, and to please God."

8. There is not a rest, or stand, allowed of God to any in the way of grace, but when much is attained, we ought still (forgetting those things which are behind, Phil. iii. 13) enlarge our desires, and bend our endeavour after more, and yet after more, seeing there is still more to be had, Phil. iii. 13; and the Lord alloweth our desires after grace to be insatiable and boundless, John xvi. 23, 24, though as to our other enjoyments, ~~he~~ would have them bounded by his allowance, Heb. xiii. 5; for Paul, supposing they had already grace, and a great measure of it,

doth nevertheless exhort them to "abound more and more."

VER. 2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

Here is a reason to enforce the exhortation. 1. The thing required by him now was nothing else but what he had enjoined them formerly. 2. Those directions he gave them were not his own, but the Lord Christ's, in whose name and authority he, as Christ's lion-herald, had proclaimed them; for the Greek word signifieth such a commandment as is published by one in the name and authority of another, and so much also is expressed, while he saith, "by the Lord Jesus," or in his name. Lastly, they did know, and were sufficiently convinced, both that he had given those commandments, and that they were not his, but Christ's.

DOCTRINES.

1. As ministers ought not to forbear the frequent repetition of one and the same truths, until they obtain from people their due acceptance, though still with some delectable variety, in some circumstances of their delivery, lest otherwise they become loathed of the hearers: so, the more that a duty is inculcated, we are the more obliged to take notice of it, and will have the more guilt if we neglect and slight it; for Paul presseth obedience to the former exhortation, from this, that he had frequently pressed it before, as well as now: "For ye know what commandments we gave you."

2. As the Lord's ministers ought to deliver nothing for a rule of faith or manners unto their hearers, but what they have a warrant for from Christ, for they are but ministers of Christ, and publishers of his will to his people, and not lords of their faith, 2 Cor. i. 24; so the Lord's people should receive nothing of their hand, but that for which they can produce such a warrant: for the injunctions which Paul gave them, and they were to receive from him, were only such, "the commandments which he gave them by the Lord Jesus."

3. The more we know our duty, and are convinced of a tie laid on by God himself to walk in it, the greater should be our care to make conscience of it; otherwise our knowledge will be our condemnation, John iii. 19, and we see sin without all cloak or excuse, John xv. 22; for the strength of this present argument lieth in their knowledge: "For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus."

VER. 3. For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

In this verse, he doth first declare what that is wherein he did exhort them to abound, ver. 1, to wit, "sanctification," which, being taken as it is our duty, is a serious and constant endeavour after a full and thorough conformity of the whole man, both outward and inward, James iv. 8,

to what the Lord requireth in his word. And he addeth also a new argument to enforce the exhortation so explained, to wit, it is God's will, or the thing which he requireth, as well-pleasing unto him. Next being to press upon them some particular branches of sanctification, he begins with chastity; in pressing whereof he first exhorts them to "abstain" from the contrary vice, to wit, "fornication," which is to be taken here generally, as extended to all filthiness and uncleanness contrary to chastity, and thus it comprehends adultery, Matt. v. 32, yea, and incest, 1 Cor. v. 1.

DOCTRINES.

1. This may sufficiently commend a duty, and set us upon the practice of it, that it is willed and commanded of God, whatever otherwise be the reluctance and vain debates of flesh and blood against it, Gal. i. 16. It holdeth good in his commands alone; they are not to be disputed, but obeyed, and his will to be simply followed, without further inquiry in the grounds and reasons of it, except where those are held forth unto us by the Lord himself; for he holds out the Lord's will as a sufficient reason to press the present exhortation; "For this is the will of God," saith he.

2. The duties of sanctification are no less willed and enjoined by God to believers, than the exercise of faith itself; faith in Christ doth not loose the tie of the command and will of God binding us to duty: for, writing to believers, he saith, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

3. A minister's wisdom should lead him, in pressing holiness, not to rest upon generals, but to condescend upon such particulars of sin and duty, (by dissuading from the one and inciting to the other,) the omission or commission whereof is most common among the people of his charge; for so doth Paul, having pressed sanctification in the general, he descends unto some particular duties, and such, doubtless, as the present condition of that people did give him the occasion to pitch upon beyond others: "That ye abstain from fornication," saith he.

4. As sanctification includeth not only the practice of duty, but also the mortification of and abstinence from sin; so there are no sins that a holy heart will scare more at, and strive to mortify, than those to which his fleshly appetite would enslave him; such sins being not only ensnaring when given way to, Eccles. vii. 26, because most delightful, but also most inconsistent with, at least most destructive of, the work of grace in the heart, 1 Pet. ii. 11; for the apostle doth press abstinence from fornication as a main branch of sanctification: "That ye abstain from fornication," saith he.

VER. 4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

In pressing chastity, he doth next prescribe a remedy against the forementioned sin, and thereby enjoineth the exercise of the contrary virtue,

to wit, "That every one of them," without exception, "should" not only abstain from fornication, but also "know," and acquaint themselves, how they might, by a holy kind of skill and artifice, "possess," or make use of their body, here called their "vessel," or an instrument of any sort, (as the word is generally taken,) because the body is the instrument of the soul, by which it acts; a vessel or receptacle wherein for the time it is preserved. And the manner how they were to possess it, and make right use of it, is in two words, none whereof do exclude the lawful use of the marriage-bed, Heb. xiii. 4; but it is, 1. In "sanctification," that is, not only in freedom from fleshly pollutions, but also in making all the members of the body subservient to the soul, in all those offices for which they are appointed, and chiefly in the practice of holy duties, Rom. vi. 19. 2. In "honour," that is, not so much, or only by taking lawful and necessary care to provide all things needful for the body, (though that be not excluded, see upon Col. ii. 23,) but also, and mainly, by preserving it in that measure of purity, and freedom from every kind of sinful defilement, which is suitable to that honour put on it by God, of being made a temple to the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 15: he seemeth to allude to that more than ordinary cleanness and purity wherein these vessels were kept, which were dedicated to the service of God in the sanctuary, Exod. xl. 9, 10.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Lord requireth not only inward sanctity in the understanding, will, and affections, but also outward, in the body and all its members; and therefore it is not sufficient for us to know our duty, and have some inward good liking of it, the outward man in the mean time being left at liberty, and as it were without a rule, to do or not to do as may make most for the man's safety from hazard, for his pleasure, credit, or advantage: for Paul seemeth to obviate the error of some who thought otherwise, while he requireth "every man to possess his vessel" or body "in sanctification."

2. The moral law, and more particularly the law enjoining chastity, and keeping the soul and body free from fleshly lusts, doth oblige all and every one, without exception of any, to obedience; so that neither great, Deut. xvii. 17, nor small, Deut. xxiii. 17, man nor woman, James iv. 4, young nor old, 1 Cor. vii., may plead exemption, for the command is given to every one: "That every one should know how to possess his vessel."

3. There is a kind of divine art of chastity, and no small skill required, to keep a man's soul and body free from fleshly uncleanness; some rules of which heavenly art are briefly these. The outward senses must be kept from enticing objects, Job xxxi. 1; loose and wanton company eschewed, Prov. v. 8; meat, drink, and sleep soberly used, Ezek. xvi. 49; our ordinary callings diligently plied, Ezek. xvi. 49; the first motions and stirrings within of fleshly lust quickly suppressed, Exod. xx. 17; prayer to God for strength to resist temptations frequently used, Matt. xxvi. 41; and if none of those pre-

vail, marriage, the means appointed of God for eschewing fornication, must be entered, 1 Cor. vii. 2: for Paul implieth that there is skill and knowledge required for this thing, while he saith, "That every one of you should know how to possess."

4. As every man ought to possess his own body, or be master of it, and not be possessed by it, or enslaved to it, by spending his precious time in an excessive pampering of it with meat, drink, sleep, Ezek. xvi. 49, or gorgeous raiment, Isa. iii. 18, &c.; so doth he possess it as he ought, when not only he doth not yield his members servants unto uncleanness, or to iniquity of any sort, Rom. vi. 19, but also doth subject it to God; and keep it subservient as an instrument of the renewed soul, in giving obedience to the revealed will of God; for this is it that Paul teacheth, while he biddeth every man "possess," or make use of his body, as a "vessel," or instrument of the soul, and "in sanctification and honour."

VER. 5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

He doth, thirdly, in pressing chastity, show how far that abstinence from fornication, mentioned ver. 3, doth reach, even to a restraining not only the external act, but also the inward lust of concupiscence, or, as the word signifieth, the feverish fit, or violent passion of burning desire, which boileth within, through all the members of the body, 1 Cor. vii. 9, disturbing the judgment, as with a high fit of a fever, and provoking both body and mind to the outward act of filthiness. And, fourthly, he gives a reason enforcing the dissuasive, lest otherwise they should be like the profane "Gentiles," who were for the most part given over of God to the base slavery of their filthy lusts; and that because they "knew not God," to wit, savingly, and as he is revealed in his word; neither did they rightly improve that natural knowledge which they had of him, and therefore God gave them up to uncleanness, Rom. i. 21 with 24.

DOCTRINES.

1. As concupiscence, and the first inordinate motions to lust, when not timeously curbed, do become passionate, inflaming the body, and restraining the judgment from solid thoughts of any other thing, but of what may tend to fulfil them; so such violent passions, and feverish fits of fleshly concupiscence, do put both the body and mind out of frame for discharging any duty of holiness in a way honourable to God; for he sheweth that "concupiscence" groweth to "lust," or to a violent passion, and a kind of frenzy, as the word implieth; and that the prevalency of this passion and lust, is opposite to that possessing the body in sanctification and honour, mentioned ver. 4: "Not in the lust of concupiscence," saith he.

2. As there is need of the former divine art, mentioned ver. 4, Doct. 3, to allay and root out those feverish fits of burning lust; so, except they be one way or other allayed, a man cannot possess his body as master of it, but is in daily

hazard to be trailed as a slave, to fulfil the utmost of those fleshly lusts which are burning in it: for while he requireth every one to know "how to possess his body, not in the lust of concupiscence," he implieth, that otherwise he is not a full possessor of it, and that there is skill and knowledge required unto a man for keeping his body free of those boiling passions.

3. As there are several degrees of one and the same sin, the former whereof maketh way to the latter; so then do we set against a sin to purpose, when we not only lop the utmost branches, or set ourselves to refrain from the outward act, but also to restrain the inward motions and desires of the heart after it: for he will have them to set against the inward "lust," or passion, "of concupiscence," as the most ready mean of abstinence from the breaking out of concupiscence in the outward act of fornication, spoken of ver. 3.

4. The sight of sin's prevalence in others should not allure us to it, but much rather scare us from it, there being thereby occasion offered to get a more full and clear sight of the tyranny and loathsome filthiness of sin given way to, than can be attained by the hearing of the ear, and word-speaking; for therefore doth he set before them the prevalence of this sin among the pagan Gentiles, to scare them from it: "Even as the Gentiles," saith he.

5. As that is only worthy to be called the knowledge of God, which is operative upon the heart and affections, so ignorance of God is a woful root, from whence many other sins do spring up, the Lord sometimes judicially giving the ignorant person over to those other sins, as a just punishment for his affected ignorance; besides that the knowledge of God, which we ought to have, includeth the knowledge of our duty, wherein we honour him being so known, and therefore they who know not God cannot but sin, as not knowing whereto they stumble; for although the pagan Gentiles had some knowledge of God, yet, because their knowledge was not operative and effectual, he affirms simply they knew him not, and makes their ignorance the cause of their uncleanness: "Even as the Gentiles which know not God."

6. Though the child of God is not bound to abstain from every thing which unrenewed men practise, for even they may do some things which are in themselves and materially good, Rom. ii. 14, yet as they should eschew every sinful practice of others, so especially such practices as are speaking evidences of their living in their unrenewed state; for Paul dissuades them from living in the lust of uncleanness, because this was the practice of the unrenewed Gentiles, and such a practice as did demonstrate they knew nothing of God savingly, and as they ought: "Even as the Gentiles," saith he, "which know not God."

VER. 6. That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

He doth here press a second branch of that sanctification, spoken of ver. 1. The exhortation is first proposed to this sense; that in no "mat-

ter," or in no business of common commerce, they should wrong their brother, either by open violence, (as the word rendered "go beyond" implieth, it signifieth to go above, or trample upon one as despicable, and so expreseth to the life, the nature and way of proud and insolent oppressors,) nor yet by secret fraud and deceit, (as the other word is expressly rendered, see also 2 Cor. vii. 2,) and the party whom they are discharged to oppress or deceive, is their "brother," that is, one of the same religion with them, Deut. xvii. 15; whereby he meaneth not as if it were lawful to oppress others, (see the contrary, Exod. xxii. 21,) but because the most of their traffic and commerce being probably with Christians and among themselves, the consideration of their interest in the person injured by them, would add no small weight to their sin, 1 Cor. vi. 6. Next, he addeth a reason to enforce not only this dissuasive, but the former, ver. 5, and it is taken from one dreadful effect of all such sins, they lay open the person guilty to God's dreadful vengeance: and he confirmeth the truth hereof from this, that he had often told them so much before when he was with them, and not only simply told, but seriously "testified," and earnestly obtested them to believe the truth of what he had deposed, as it were upon oath unto them, for so much doth the word imply.

DOCTRINES.

1. The wise Lord hath judged it fitting so to dispense of things worldly unto mankind, not giving all things needful unto any one, as that men cannot live without mutual commerce, and exchange of commodities from one hand to another; for he supposes the necessity of mutual commerce, while he forbiddeth oppression and deceit in it: "That no man go beyond his brother in any matter," or in any business of common commerce.

2. So covetous is man by nature of that which is his neighbour's, and so little willing to reverence the Lord in the measure of things worldly dispensed unto him, Isa. v. 8, that he is easily tempted to catch advantage of his neighbour in the matter of commerce, and to make up his own worldly estate by impairing the estate of others; for Paul, while he forbiddeth this evil, supposeth that men are prone to fall in it: "That no man go beyond or defraud his brother."

3. So enslaving an evil is covetousness, that where it reigneth it maketh the covetous wretch employ the utmost both of his power and skill to give it satisfaction; for Paul, while he forbids both going beyond, or oppressing by power, and defrauding by skill, implieth that both power and skill is usually employed for carrying on this sin: "That no man go beyond or defraud."

4. So subtle a fisher and hunter after souls is Satan, Eph. vi. 11, as that he hath several sorts of temptations, according to the several tempers and abilities of people, to ensnare them with, in one and the same sin; so that when any are effortedly shameless in wickedness, and love to be known and feared as such, and have power to bear them out to act their villainies, he then tempts them to oppress avowedly, and with strong hand; and for others who either have not

power or good will to carry on their wickedness in open view, those he tempts to defraud or deceive, teaching them a way how to sin, and not to be so easily discovered in their sin; for Paul supposes there were temptations of both those kinds, while he forbids to yield to either: "That no man go beyond or defraud his brother."

5. Whatever pretexes a man may find out to render one sin, and especially his own sin, more plausible and excusable than another, yet, no pretext of that kind can licentiate a man to live in any sin; neither the open oppressor who pretends plain, even down dealing, and kything [showing] himself to be what he is, nor yet the subtle deceiver who pretends law and fair bargain, are excusable; but both of them are alike guilty before the Lord, for both are here condemned: "That no man go beyond or defraud his brother."

6. As impunity from men doth harden the wicked much in sin, so the Lord doth always supply the defects of man's justice, by taking vengeance here or hereafter, especially upon those sins whereof judges among men do take less notice; for such are the sins here forbidden, fleshly uncleanness, oppression by the great, and subtle cheating under pretext of law by the politic and worldly wise, are not much punished by men, hence are they so common; and therefore saith Paul, "The Lord is the avenger of all such."

7. So strong is the interest of sin in fallen man, and chiefly of such sins as bring worldly profit and pleasure with them, that there is need of word upon word, and reason upon reason, to scare him from them; and there must be not only love to the commander to constrain, but also the terror of God to persuade; for having given one argument, ver. 3, to dissuade from those pleasant and profitable sins, from the signification of God's will, he seeth it yet needful to add another here, from God's vengeance and terror, being to add more afterwards: "Because that the Lord is the avenger of all such," saith he.

8. As where sin is, there God's vengeance doth follow, either upon the sinner himself, or a cautioner in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 21; so the Lord doth allow a gracious soul, neither is it inconsistent with grace in the soul, to abstain from sin, as from other more prime, so from this inferior motive, the fear of God's vengeance to ensue and follow; for he sheweth God doth avenge such sins, and dissuades even believers from them, because "he is the avenger of all such."

9. A minister must not think that his once denouncing the terror of divine vengeance against the sinner for his sin will scare him from it, neither must he give over the matter as hopeless, when his former dreadful certifications have had little or no effect, but he must yet again renew his zeal, reiterate former threatenings and other arguments, as not knowing when the Lord shall be pleased to give the wished-for success, 2 Tim. ii. 25: for Paul reiterates this dreadful certification, though he had often told it before, and as it appears without any success as to some; "As we also have forewarned you," saith he.

10. So stupid are men for the most part, and

so slow to believe the truth of divine threatenings, Deut. xxix. 19; that if ministers when they threaten be not the more serious and fervent, the most terrible threatening will but little affect the most part of hearers; some one shift or other will be found out to put them by to break their dint, and to make them of no effect; for therefore Paul, in denouncing this terrible threatening, did seriously testify, and fervently obtest them to take warning from it: "As we also have forewarned you and testified."

VER. 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

In this verse there is a second argument for enforcing all the former exhortations, both general and particular, positive and negative; and it is taken from the end intended by God, when he did first effectually call them, that is, draw them out of nature to the state of grace, Col. i. 13, which is expressed, first, negatively, it was not that they might thence take liberty to defile themselves with sin of any kind; for the word, "uncleanness," must be taken here in that general sense, as being opposed to sanctification, and containing under it all the sins formerly forbidden, not only fornication which is "uncleanness" strictly taken, but also oppression and fraud. Next, positively, he had "called them to sanctification," or that they might be sanctified, and live in the constant exercise of all the sanctifying graces of God's Spirit.

DOCTRINES.

1. As God is a dreadful avenger of all sin, so chiefly of such sins of professors of the gospel as do reflect upon their Christian calling, either as hardly consistent with it, Deut. xxxii. 5, or as opening the mouths of profane atheists to reproach it, 2 Sam. xii. 14; for he here gives this reason why God is the avenger of all such sins, God had called them to abstinence from them, and consequently their lying in them would reflect upon their calling: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness," saith he.

2. It is the duty of called Christians, in all their actions and employments, to examine all by the rule of their Christian calling, and to do or not do accordingly, being always loth to do any thing which may in the least measure reflect upon it, though it should otherwise bring them never so much pleasure or advantage; for he will have them to abstain from the flesh-pleasing sin of uncleanness, and the profitable sin of covetousness, fraud and oppression, upon this account, they were not according to the rule of their Christian calling: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness," saith he.

3. So averse are all men by nature from the duties of holiness, Rom. viii. 7; so impotent to go about them, as being dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, that the Lord must first draw us out of nature to the state of grace, and create in us a new heart and abilities to do good, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, when he effectually calleth us, before we mind holiness in earnest: "For he hath called us unto holiness," saith he.

4. Though some do abuse grace unto wantonness, and pretend they may sin without fear, (when, as they suppose, they are effectually called,) because the root of the matter is in them, and grace once received cannot be lost, Rom. vi. 15; yet as such corrupt reasonings receive no encouragement, neither from the author of grace, the holy God, nor from the end of bestowing grace, which is our sanctification and holiness; so if any, externally called by the ministry of the gospel, do live loosely or profanely, it should not in reason reflect upon this holy calling, but upon the persons themselves, who do not walk worthy of it and suitable unto it, (as is enjoined, Eph. iv. 1,) and thereby evidence the external call of the gospel hath never received inward entertainment in their heart; for Paul supposing some might have such perverse reasonings as these, doth here refute them, as having no ground from our Christian calling, seeing it is God who calleth, and "callest not to uncleanness, but unto holiness."

VER. 8. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

Followeth a third argument to press the same thing, and it is taken from the heinousness of their sin, if they should despise, reject, or set at nought (as the word signifieth) those wholesome apostolical counsels and commands. They should hereby despise or reject, "not man," to wit, only, or chiefly, "but God," speaking in him and by him, which he proveth from this, that God had given his Holy Spirit, by whose guidance and assistance he had given to them the forementioned commands, ver. 2: see the like expression for asserting the divine authority of what he wrote, 1 Cor. vii. 40.

DOCTRINES.

1. When ministers have done their utmost in holding forth the beauty of holiness, and pressing by the strongest of reasons, the practice of it upon people's consciences, there will be always some so far from yielding obedience, that the more they are pressed to duty, they will be the more averse from it, and in the end prove profane mockers and despisers of all which can be said to that purpose; for Paul, after all his exhortations and reasons, supposeth there would be some such despisers, while he sets himself against them: "He therefore that despiseth."

2. Though such profane despisers of exhortations to duty, and of threatenings denounced in case of neglect of duty, do please themselves with vain thoughts, that the minister, a despicable man, is only their party, whose pleasure they do not regard, whose displeasure they do not fear, Jer. xviii. 18; yet, herein they are hugely mistaken, the great God is their party; he it is whom they despise, and who will reckon with them as setters at nought of him: for so saith Paul, "he therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God."

3. So much are faithful ministers owned of God

in the discharge of their trust, that what respect or disrespect is put upon them, or the message which they carry, it is reckoned by him as put upon himself, and that because they are ambassadors in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 20. "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God," saith he.

4. The great reason for which a people's carriage towards the message and person of their faithful ministers, reflecteth upon God himself is, that they in discharge of their trust do represent him, and all their regular actings are owned by him as his own; for from what he spoke, ver. 7, that the act of sent ministers, in calling sinners by the ministry of the gospel, 2 Cor. xi. 2, is owned by God himself as his deed, he inferreth here, that therefore "he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God."

5. Though faithful ministers are men, and therefore both may and must be affected with injuries and affronts put upon them by profane atheists, while they set at nought their person and reject their message, Jer. xx. 2, 18, yet the dishonour done thereby to God doth bear so much bulk in their minds, as if any disgrace put upon themselves, being compared with that, were not to be regarded, and not so much as once to be named; for though profane mockers despise the ministers, yet so little is that comparatively valued by Paul, that he saith, "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God."

6. Though the contempt and disgrace cast even upon ordinary ministers, by slighting their message, redoundeth to God, for the reasons given, Doct. 3, 4, yet this did hold chiefly in the apostles, and other penmen of holy Scripture, who were infallibly assisted in what they wrote, 2 Pet. i. 21, and in ordinary ministers but in so far as they follow their steps, and deliver nothing to the Lord's people for truth but what they have warrant for in the written word of God; for the reason here given is peculiar to the apostles and other extraordinary office-bearers, who only had the Holy Spirit to guide them infallibly: "Who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit," saith he.

VER. 9. But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

He doth here press a third branch of sanctification, called brotherly love, which is that singular, and, as it were, native (and therefore called brotherly) love and affection, testified by action which ought to be, and in some measure is (1 John v. 1) in God's children mutually, and one to another, for the reality or appearance of God's grace in them, Psa. cxix. 63. And he presseth the exercise of this grace, first, by commending them for their progress herein already, which was such that they had not so great need to have it pressed upon them as others; for that the words must be understood not simply and absolutely, as they sound, but comparatively, (as other scrip-

tural expressions of the like kind, John ix. 41; 1 Cor. i. 17,) appears from his pressing this same duty on them, ver. 10, which he would not have done if there had been no need at all for it. Secondly, by giving a reason why it was not needful for him to write much to this purpose, because "they were taught of God to love one another;" that is, their hearts were powerfully inclined to the actual exercise of this grace, by the efficacious working of God's Spirit, not without, but accompanying the outward ministry of the word, Acts xvi. 14; for so is God's teaching explained in opposition to man's, Jer. xxxi. 33. This is contained, ver. 9. Thirdly, by further commending them, while he proveth they were so taught of God, from the effect of his teaching, their real practice and exercise of this grace "towards all" the Christians, here called brethren, in the region of Macedonia, wherein Thessalonica was the chief city. And fourthly, by exhorting them expressly, notwithstanding their former progress, not only to persevere, but also to "abound more and more" in the exercise of that grace.

From ver. 9, learn, 1. Where sanctifying grace is wrought in the heart by God, there will not only be an abstaining from wrong, hurt, and injury to our neighbour, but there must and will be also an inward propension, seconded with real endeavours to do him good, and help him forward both in his bodily, Lev. xxxv. 25, and spiritual estate, 1 Thess. v. 11; for the apostle, having pressed abstinence from doing wrong to our neighbour, ver. 6, as one branch of that sanctification mentioned ver. 3, he doth here enjoin the exercise of brotherly love, as another branch of the same grace: "But as touching brotherly love," &c.

2. It is a singular piece of ministerial prudence seasonably to commend what good they observe in the Lord's people, and so to commend it, as that thereby they be not rendered proud or secure, but strongly incited to make further progress in that good which they already have; and people ought to improve what countenance or commendation they receive from their faithful pastors for the same end, otherwise it becomes their snare, Matt. xvi. 17, compared with 22; for Paul doth here commend the progress they had already made in the exercise of brotherly love, of purpose to incite them to further progress. "As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you," saith he.

3. So apt are the best to be discouraged in good, Heb. xii. 12, and so much doth the known good opinion concerning some in the minds of others, (especially of their faithful pastors, 2 Cor. viii. 24,) prevail with them for their incitement to do better, Acts xxvi. 27, 28, that as ministers ought not to flatter any in an evil, 1 Thess. ii. 5, so they should not rashly pass a hard sentence upon any, 2 Tim. ii. 24, or reject the meanest appearance of good in them as counterfeit and naught, Zech. iv. 10, but should cherish the day of small things in the people of their charge, not only in charity believing, 1 Cor. xiii. 7, but also alleging the best upon them, that hereby they may be incited, and in a manner constrained to do better; for so doth Paul here: "As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you."

4. The Lord's ministers must not expect that all within their charge shall be alike docile, tractable, and easy to be wrought upon, by powerful exhortations to holy duties, or all alike backward, dull, and unteachable; there are usually some of both kinds, so that though some must have word upon word, and line upon line, and all to little purpose, Isa. xxviii. 13, yet there are others with whom less than that will prevail; for such were those Thessalonians, so tractable, that Paul needed not take so much pains upon them, as upon others, "Ye need not that I write unto you," saith he.

5. That any are thus more docile and easy to be wrought upon than others, doth not proceed from any natural difference of a better or worse disposition, for all are by nature alike averse, and indisposed unto any thing which is spiritually good, Rom. viii. 7, but from the Lord's effectual blessing upon the means of instruction towards some more than others; for Paul gives this as a reason of their proficiency beyond others; "For ye yourselves are taught of God," saith he.

6. Though the Spirit of God, the inward teacher of his people, doth not teach immediately by enthusiasms, dreams, or raptures, without, and much less, contrary to the word, Isa. viii. 20, but in and by the use of second means, and especially by a sent ministry, Rom. x. 15, whose labours he doth effectually bless to the elect, and so doth inwardly teach them, 1 Cor. xv. 10; yet where the Spirit of God doth thus effectually and inwardly teach, there is the less need of outward means, though there be always some, even to the best, until their graces be made perfect in heaven, Eph. iv. 13, only a little of outward means will do more good to such, than ten times more can do to others. In a word, those are easily taught whom God doth teach; and therefore, though eminent abilities are much to be wished for in ministers, Titus i. 9, yet we ought not to be so anxious about the weakness or eminency of gifts in them, as fervently desirous to have God's teaching to come along with theirs; for Paul shows that God, by his teaching those Thessalonians, had made them stand the less in need of being taught by him, while he saith, "Ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God."

From ver. 10, learn, 1. All those whom God doth teach do profit under his hand, he doth so teach as the wills of those who are taught by him are powerfully bowed, and actually inclined to practise and obey what he teacheth; and herein his teaching doth differ from man's, who can only inform the judgment, by clearing up things to the understanding, but cannot effectually determine the will to obey, 1 Cor. iii. 6; for Paul sheweth that the effect of God's teaching them is their real practice. "And indeed ye do it," saith he.

2. As Christian brotherly love excludeth none, but is extended unto all who have real grace, or promising evidences thereof, so the great and main motive which draweth out this brotherly love to the party loved, is the reality or appearance of a gracious work in him, and not other hy-respects only, or mainly, as of kindred, friendship, or favours bestowed by them, Matt. v. 46;

for he sheweth that they exercised their love to others under the notion of, or because they were, "brethren;" and did extend it to all of that sort which were "in all Macedonia."

3. Though the exercise of brotherly love be a duty incumbent unto all equally, as to that which is inward of it in the heart and affection, 1 Pet. i. 22, yet as to what is external, and especially as to its fruit, or beneficence in supplying the outward straits of the people of God, there is more or less required from several persons, according to the capacity in which the Lord hath put them to discharge it; for Thessalonica being the chief city in that whole region, and so most able to exercise beneficence, did extend their brotherly love, even as to this act of it doubtless, "to all the brethren in all Macedonia."

4. It is a duty in a special manner incumbent unto those who are any way eminent in riches, power, or credit, whether they be cities, societies, or particular persons, to employ their eminency as a shelter, help, and encouragement to piety and those who are pious, in those places especially where they are, and as far as their power may reach; for so did those of this eminent city, Thessalonica, extend their brotherly love in the fruits of it "towards all the brethren in all Macedonia."

5. Even the most praiseworthy graces of most eminent saints have their own defects, and fall exceedingly short of that perfection which is required, and should be aimed at, 1 Cor. xiii. 9; for though he had commended them much for their brotherly love, yet he implieth there was some lack in it, while he beseecheth them "to increase more and more."

But 6, and more particularly, this grace of brotherly love can never be at such an height in any, but it is capable of increase, either by intending it more, while it groweth more fervent, and consequently farther out of hazard of being quenched by those provocations which might otherwise cool it, 2 Cor. xii. 15, or by extending it more, especially in its fruits of beneficence towards more and more objects, Eccles. xi. 1, 2, or by spiritualising it more, while there is a greater abstractedness in its exercise from self-ends and motives, Rom. xii. 9; for Paul insinuates their brotherly love, so much commended, was capable of increase, while he bids them "increase more and more."

7. See a further note, ver. 1, Doct. 8, grounded upon this injunction, "increase more and more."

VER. 11. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

He doth here press a fourth branch of sanctification, to wit, that they would "study," (or as the word signifieth, contend with such eagerness as ambitious men do for honour,) "to be of a quiet spirit," without creating trouble either to themselves or others, by their importunate intruding upon other men's business, with neglect of their own concerns, and by seeking to live upon the labours of others. And that this is intended by the "quietness" here enjoined,

appeareth in part by the means prescribed for attaining to it, which are first, "that every man do his own business," that is, meddle with those things, and those only, which come within the compass of his duty; so that he condemneth not a charitable minding of the affairs of others, when we are called to it, Phil. ii. 4, but only a restless intermeddling with such things as concern us not. Secondly, that he "work with his own hands," whereby he enjoineth industry and painfulness in our callings; and what he speaketh of the "hands," must be taken figuratively, for any member of the body or faculty of the mind which men make chief use of in any lawful calling; which last piece of the duty chiefly is enforced first, from his own apostolic authority, who had so enjoined when he was with them. (See 2 Thess. iii. 16.)

DOCTRINES.

1. There is not any one thing more inconsistent with the grace of brotherly love, and with the exercise of that grace, than a turbulent spirit who must have some meddling hand in every thing wherein he is concerned least, and doth sinfully neglect those other things wherein, by virtue of his station, he is concerned most: for so much is implied while the apostle presseth the exercise of a quiet spirit, in opposition to that turbulent, meddling humour, immediately after "brotherly love," as a help unto it: "And that ye study to be quiet," saith he.

2. As a man's greatest honour doth stand in the exercise of Christian virtues, and more especially in a Christian, peaceable, and sober deportment, flowing from a meek and quiet spirit, which is a choice piece of that ornament wherewith Christians should be adorned, 1 Pet. iii. 4; so this calm and peaceable frame of a quiet spirit will be found not easily, nor without the utmost of our serious endeavours attainable, if we consider not only how great an enemy Satan is to this, as to all other graces, Ephes. iv. 26, 27, but also how corruptly all men are by nature principled to think this truly Christian honour but their shame, and a living and dying in obscurity and disgrace, Judges ix. 1, 2; and that those are only honourable who, by winding themselves into all businesses, are admired, or feared, or depended upon by all, 1 Sam. xv. 1—5; for, as it was said in the exposition, the word rendered "study" signifieth to contend with such eagerness as ambitious men do for honour, which implieth both that this quiet frame of spirit should be looked upon as our honour, and not attainable if not eagerly sought after: "And that ye study to be quiet," saith he.

3. This Christian frame of a meek and quiet spirit, with a calm and peaceable deportment flowing from it, is a far other thing than a love to live in sluggish ease, and to eschew even the necessary trouble which God doth sometimes call us to encounter in the way of duty; for such a base desire of sluggish ease is here opposed to it, while he prescribeth, as a help for attaining this quiet frame of spirit, that "we do our own business, and work with our own hands."

4. As those pragmatic spirits and busybodies who do importunately ingyre [intrude]

themselves upon the affairs of others, and can suffer nothing, neither of public nor private concernment, to pass them, except they intermeddle with it, either as umpires or parties, or as some one way or other concerned in it; as those, I say, do create much trouble and strife both to themselves and others, so a choice preservative of peace and quietness in public societies, and in men's own spirits, is that every man being content with the station wherein he is set, 1 Cor. vii. 20, 21, do busy himself with those things only to which he is called by God, as knowing that the best things done with the best intention, if without a calling to them, are displeasing to the Lord, 2 Sam. vi. 7; for Paul doth teach both those while he enjoineeth, as a help for attaining this quiet and peaceable frame of spirit, that every man meddle with those things, and those only, which come within the compass of his duty: "And to do your own business," saith he.

5. As most busy meddlers with the affairs of others are usually greatest neglecters of their own, so lazy idleness and sloth in those things of a man's own concernment, do usually drive him to straits, and from that to employ his wits how he may one way or other prey upon other men's estates for his own subsistence, and thereby disturb both his own peace and the peace of others; for while he enjoineeth diligence and industry in a man's own calling, as a help to attain this quiet and peaceable frame of spirit, he implieth that contrary sloth doth usually drive men to busy meddling, and to disturb both themselves and others: "And to work with your own hands," saith he.

6. As the Lord alloweth none to live idle, but will have all to employ the wit and strength which he hath given them in some one lawful calling or other, wherein they may promote the good either of church, family, or commonwealth, Eph. iv. 28; so painfulness and industry in our own callings is a singular help to stop our ears from being taken with the alluring sound of many enchanting temptations, and of those in particular which would allure us to meddle with the affairs of others to their prejudice, and to employ our wit in raising stirrings and divisions among societies for our own advantage; we should find so much of work, what from one thing, what from another, at home, as should make us loth to go abroad, except when we are called and pressed to it: for, as a help to attain a quiet and peaceable frame of spirit, he enjoineeth every one "to work with their own hands."

7. It is the duty of ministers to press upon people not only the practice of religious duties, but also diligence and painfulness in the duties of every man's particular calling; and so to press the former, as under a pretext of zeal and diligence in those, he do not make way for, or connive at negligence in the latter: for Paul doth so, not only here, but also shows he had done it formerly: "Work with your own hands, as we commanded you," saith he.

8. The word preached doth not presently vanish when spoken by ministers, but stands as a constant rule for all time coming, though never so long after, binding the consciences of those who heard it to walk by it, as they would not be

judged for their disobedience to it; and therefore the word when preached should be carefully laid up in the hearts of hearers for that end: for Paul sheweth that the word which he had preached to them when he was with them was binding to them yet: "As I commanded you," saith he.

VER. 12. That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

Here are other two arguments for pressing industry and painfulness in their calling: first, hereby they should "walk honestly," and in a seemly decency, in the eyes of those who were "without," or of unconverted Pagans, (so called, 1 Cor. v. 12, as being without the pale of Christ's visible church,) and otherwise both they themselves and the Christian religion should be reproached by those heathens.

2. Hereby, and by God's blessing upon their diligence, Prov. x. 22, they should attain to such a tolerable competency in things worldly as to have lack of nothing, to wit, which the Lord did see fit and convenient for them to have, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

DOCTRINES.

1. Such is our love to sloth and ease, Prov. vi. 9, 10, and so prone are people to abuse the doctrine of Christian liberty, as a pretence for shaking off the yoke of all necessary and painful duty, Gal. v. 13, that the most of people, especially those who can by their wits find out a sinful shift, covered over with some handsome pretext, to subsist otherways, can hardly be kept from giving themselves over to idleness, or stirred up to look upon diligence in particular callings as a matter of conscience: for therefore is it that Paul seeth it necessary to use so many arguments to enforce upon witty meddlers in other men's affairs diligence in their own: "That ye may walk honestly."

2. As diligence and industry in the duties of a man's particular calling is a piece of seemly decency and honesty, so there is nothing more unseemly and base than a lazy sluggard, who, being neither profitable to himself nor others, doth live as if he were only born to eat, drink, and sleep, and do nothing else; and though such idle sluggards be neither whoremongers nor thieves, yet they may and should be justly branded with dishonesty, and esteemed to lead no honest life: for so much doth Paul teach while he calleth painful industry a walking honestly: "That ye may walk honestly," saith he.

3. It is the duty of Christians, as in the first place to approve themselves to God, Matt. viii. 4, and next unto good men, Psal. lii. 9; so also, in the third place, to those who are "without," even naughty, wicked, and profane men; in so far at least as that we do not scare them from Christ, and give them occasion to speak evil of religion, 1 Tim. v. 14: for so doth Paul enjoin; "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without."

4. There is not any thing that makes both re.

ligion and those who profess the same more unseemly and unsavoury to profane men, than when those who pretend much to religion do, under any pretence whatsoever, live lazy sluggards in their particular callings, exposing themselves and theirs to be a burden to others, and to live upon the sweat of other men's faces: they are so much convinced from nature's light of the unseemliness of this sin, that as they burden religion with all the blemishes of those who profess it, so they cannot think that such a religion hath God for its author which giveth people liberty to live in the practice of such an evil: for while Paul affirmeth that their painful diligence in a particular calling would be "a walking honestly toward them that are without," he insinuates that they would reproach them and religion both with dishonesty if they lived idly.

5. It is no small mercy for a man to have competency of things worldly, so as he neither know the power and strength of those temptations which arise from pinching scarcity and want, Prov. xxxi. 9, nor yet be necessitated to depend for a livelihood upon the coldrife [cold-hearted] and oftentimes merciless charity of others, James ii. 15, 16; for Paul teacheth them so much while he persuades them to painful diligence by a promise of desirable competency: "And that ye may have lack of nothing," saith he.

6. See a further note from the strength of this argument to enforce industry and painfulness in our lawful callings, upon Eph. iv. 28, Doct. 6; "That ye may have lack of nothing."

VER. 13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

In the second part of the chapter the apostle, while he presseth a fifth branch of sanctification, to wit, moderation of sorrow for their friends who died in Christ, many whereof were doubtless martyrs for the truth in those days of persecution, chap. ii. 14, and while he gives them many sweet grounds of consolation against immoderate grief, he falleth out in a digression concerning the state of believers after death and Christ's second coming. And in this verse he first proposeth his scope in all; which is, first, to remove all ignorance, uncertainty, or want of full persuasion of the truth of those things which he is afterward to deliver, and especially of the state of believers after death. Next, that hereby they might learn to moderate their "sorrow" and grief for their deceased friends, and not to mourn excessively or desperately as "others," to wit, the pagan Gentiles did, "who had no hope" of life, or of a resurrection following. And while he calleth the dead (after the usual manner of Scripture, Acts vii. 60, 1 Cor. xv. 20, John xi. 11,) by the name of those who "sleep," he sets down the first head of doctrine concerning the state of believers after death, which also serveth for an argument to moderate the excessive sorrow of living friends for them, even this, that their death is but a sleep, not a sleeping of the soul, which goeth immediately after death to glory, Luke xxiii. 43; but

of their bodies which rest in the grave, free from trouble and care, as a man doth in his bed, and it shall be raised up from the grave in the morning of the resurrection, Psa. xvii. 15, by the voice of Christ, with as little difficulty as one will awake his sleeping friend, John v. 25, and shall arise refreshed, recreated, and in full vigour, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, to go about their endless work of praises to God and the Lamb, through the long lasting day of never-ending eternity, (see ver. 17,) as a man after sleep ariseth refreshed for his work

DOCTRINES.

1. As the children of God are often pressed down with more than ordinary sorrow and grief, arising from cross dispensations; so sometimes there is not so much cause of sorrow in the dispensation itself, as in their own ignorance, which misrepresents the Lord's way of dealing, and makes it look with a more terrible aspect than really it doth; for those Thessalonians were excessively grieved for the death of their friends, arising mainly from their ignorance of their happy estate after death, as Paul doth here imply: "For I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep."

2. As there is oftentimes, even in God's children, some dangerous ignorance of most necessary truths, if not as to the substance, yet as to the circumstances of them, or at least a great inadvertence to and want of serious perpending of these truths in time of greatest need, which is all one with ignorance of them as to any present good to be reaped by them, Matt. xvi. 9; so it is a considerable part of a minister's duty not only to labour upon the affections of people for making them choose and embrace that which is good, though he ought to do that mainly, 2 Tim. iv. 2, but also to inform their judgment by clearing their dangerous mistakes, that they may be able to discern truth from error, and that, as for other reasons, so, because of the great influence which a darkened judgment hath in misguiding the affections; for it is like they were not totally ignorant of the resurrection, yet of some comfortable circumstances of it, or at least did not seriously perpend them, which occasioned their excessive grief, and therefore Paul doth set himself to inform them: "I would not have you ignorant, that ye sorrow not."

3. It is not granted to the most near of Christian friends to enjoy the comfortable society of one another always; but however they may eschew all those other sad accidents which either do locally separate chief friends before their death, Psa. lxxxviii. 18, or make their society one way or other useless, Job xiii. 4, 5, yet death will inevitably make a separation at last; and therefore Christians in wisdom ought to improve to the best advantage their mutual society, while they enjoy it; for Paul supposeth that death had removed some eminent Christians at Thessalonica, which was cause of immoderate sorrow to such as were left behind, while he saith, "concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not."

4. Though believers in Jesus Christ be freed from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13, and consequently from death itself, as it is a piece of that

curse, Gen. ii. 17, yet death doth seize even upon them, and die they must, the Lord having so appointed, Heb. ix. 27, that through the strait and terrible passage of death they may have an entry unto life, Rev. xiv. 13. So that death hath changed its nature and use as to them, and of a prison to detain them as malefactors, it is made a passage for them to walk safely through to the possession of their kingdom as victorious conquerors; in which respect, among others, Christ by his death hath removed the sting of death unto all his followers, 1 Cor. xv. 55, &c.; for Paul sheweth that even believers among them did die: "Concerning them that are asleep," saith he.

5. There is a moderate sorrow and grief which the Lord alloweth for the death of Christian friends, though not because of any hurt or damage of theirs, who are thereby freed from all sin and misery, and rendered eternally happy, Rev. xiv. 13; yet for the loss which either we or the church of God sustain in their removal, 2 Kings ii. 12; and because the death of such is often a forerunner of sad days to come, Isa. lvii. 1; for Paul, by forbidding only immoderate grief, doth tacitly allow that which is moderate: "That ye sorrow not," saith he, "even as others who have no hope." But,

6. There is an immoderate and excessive sorrow, either for time or measure, which as even the godly through infirmity are apt to entertain, so the Lord doth disallow, and from which he willet Christians to refrain, as savouring much either of want of charity to our deceased friends, contrary to Isa. lvii. 2, or of atheistical doubts concerning the immortality of the soul, and a blessed resurrection of the body, contrary to 1 Cor. xv.; or at least of too great diffidence of God's care and providence to supply what loss we ourselves or the church of God do sustain by their removal, contrary to Matt. ix., last; for Paul dischargeth this immoderate sorrow, and upon those grounds, while he saith, "sorrow not, even as others who have no hope."

7. The serious consideration of death, and how its nature and use is changed to believers, might be of itself sufficient to stop the current of immoderate and excessive grief for their removal; for his expressing their death by a "sleep," doth serve for an argument to allay their immoderate grief, the force whereof is expressed in the exposition: "Concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not."

8. As heathens who live and die without the knowledge of Christ, are, as to salvation, in a case wholly hopeless and desperate; so that our bodies, being turned to ashes in the grave, and after that worms have consumed our flesh, Job xix. 26, shall again be raised the same for substance, and united to our souls, is a truth which nature's light, not being enlightened by the written word, could never comprehend, Acts xvii. 32; for the Gentiles are said here to have been without hope, to wit, both of salvation, and chiefly of the resurrection, as he afterwards explains. Now if they could have known a resurrection, they might have had hope of it: "Even as others," saith he, "who have no hope."

VER. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and

rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Here is a second head of the forementioned doctrine, and a second ground of consolation, to wit, that in God's due time there shall be a resurrection unto a glorious life after death; I say, unto a glorious life, for the whole strain of the text doth show that he speaks only of the resurrection of the godly, and not of the wicked unto condemnation, mentioned John v. 29; because that would have served nothing to his present scope, which is not to terrify, but to comfort them against the death of their beloved friends, (see ver. 18;) and he proves that there shall be such a glorious resurrection, first, by laying down an undoubted truth, which he supposeth all did "believe" and take for granted, to wit, that Jesus Christ, the head, had "died," and after death "rose again."

2. By inferring from this ground, that therefore the power of God shall raise and bring from the grave to life and immortality, 1 Cor. xv., "those which sleep in Jesus," that is, who are dead in Christ, and shall continue in the faith whereby they are engrafted in Christ, Eph. iii. 17, to the last gasp. And he shall "bring them with Christ," that is, through virtue of their union with him as members with their head; where he shortly hints at the force of the inference from Christ's resurrection to ours, to wit, because we are so nearly united to him; to which add, that Christ's death and resurrection are an infallible forerunner and necessary cause of our resurrection, seeing by his death he destroyed death, 2 Tim. i. 10, and arose that he might quicken us from death, 1 Cor. xv. 20, 21.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there shall be a blessed resurrection of believers unto life after death, so the faith of this truth is a singular cordial for comfort against the terror of death, in so far as though death get us once at under, yet we shall not be detained by it, and dearest friends who at death do part with grief, shall then meet with joy; for the apostle's scope is to comfort them against death from the faith of the resurrection; "For if we believe," &c.

2. Concerning Christ's death and resurrection, see upon Gal. i. 1, Doct. 7. "Jesus died and rose again."

3. Though "thus saith the Lord," and divine revelation, be a ground sufficient in itself whereupon to build our faith, Psa. lx. 6, yet such is our unwillingness to believe, especially when the thing spoken hath no ground in reason, Gen. xviii. 12, and so great is God's condescendence to help and supply our weakness, John xx. 27, that he alloweth us to make use of any other lawful mean whereby we may strengthen our faith, and as it were reason ourselves up to a belief of that which the Lord saith; for so the apostle doth teach us to take help from Christ's death and resurrection to strengthen us in the faith of our resurrection; "For if we believe," saith he, "that Jesus died and rose again, even so," &c.

4. Among other things helpful to bring us to the solid and fixed belief of revealed truths, this

is one, to single out some truths which are more easily believed than others, as having, besides the authority of God interposing for the truth of them, some further confirmation from human testimony, or their powerful effects upon our own hearts or the hearts of others, that so being once fixed and settled in the faith of those, we may be thereby in some measure helped to give credit unto all such other truths as have dependence upon them; for Paul, to bring them to the faith of their own resurrection, would have them improving the faith they had of Christ's death and resurrection, which was confirmed by so many witnesses, Luke i. 1, 2, and accompanied with wonderful effects upon the hearts of many: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so," &c.

5. As those, and those only, shall attain to the blessed resurrection of the just unto life, who continue in the faith, whereby they are ingrafted in Christ, to their latest breath, Heb. iii. 14; so the union betwixt Christ and believers, once made by faith, is so sure and firm, that death itself cannot dissolve it; yea, not only their souls, but also their bodies being separate from their souls, and in a manner from itself when dissolved in the grave to ashes, do yet remain united to Christ; for those whom God shall raise to a glorious life, are designed to be such "as sleep in Jesus," and living, dying, and dead, are still in him, yea, and their bodies, which only do properly sleep, are also in him: "Even so also them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

6. The great prop for our faith to rest upon, as to the truth of the resurrection, is the power of God, whereby he is able to do what he will, Psa. cxxxv. 6, and to make us anew out of our own ashes, as once at the first he made all things of nothing, Heb. xi. 3; for he leads them to God's power for grounding of their confidence, while he saith, "them will God bring with him."

7. Through virtue of that union betwixt believers and Christ, it cometh to pass, that whatever hath befallen Christ, as he is the head of believers, shall in God's due time be verified in believers themselves, that due proportion and distance being always kept which is betwixt head and members; for he inferreth that we shall be raised, because he arose, because of our union with him: "Them will God bring with him."

VER. 15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Followeth a third head of the forementioned doctrine, expressing the order wherein the dead shall arise, which serveth also for a third ground of consolation against immoderate sorrow. And, first, in this verse, that he may conciliate authority to the following doctrine, which transcends the reach of human reason to know and understand without special revelation, he doth, after the manner of the prophets, Zech. iv. 6, premit a preface, asserting that what he was to say was "by," or "in the word of the Lord," that is, in

his name and by virtue of express commission from him. 2. He sets down the order wherein the dead were to rise, first negatively, to this purpose: "They which shall be then alive and remain" on earth "until Christ's second coming," as a small remnant of all that numerous company of believers who had formerly lived, but ere then will be removed by death; that small remnant, I say, shall not "prevent," or have the start of those who are "asleep" or dead, to wit, neither as to their meeting with Christ in the air, nor their actual possession of glory, spoken of ver. 17: and Paul puts himself among those who shall be then alive, while he speaketh in the first person, "we;" not as if he had been to continue until then, but because he divides all believers at Christ's coming into two ranks, the living and the dead; he doth, as it were, for an example of the purpose in hand, place himself among the living, as he then was when he wrote; or that he may thereby teach believers in all times to make ready for that day, as if it were to come in their own time, because the peremptory time when it shall come is uncertain, Matt. xxiv. 42.

DOCTRINES.

1. So violent is the current of impetuous affections, when once given way to, Psal. lxxvii. 3; so hardly are we convinced of the evil that is in the excess of any thing in itself lawful, and in particular in the excess of immoderate grief, John iv. 4, 9, that a word in the by will not allay it; there must be word upon word, and reason upon reason, to demonstrate not only the sinfulness of it, but also that there is no reason for it; for Paul having given two reasons already to allay their immoderate sorrow, he doth here give a third, taken from the order wherein the dead shall rise; "For this we say unto you," &c.

2. As ministers should bring forth nothing for truth, but that to which they may permit, "Thus saith the Lord;" so whatever truths they deliver, though never so far above the reach of nature's light, if once it be made known that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken them, we ought without further inquiry to stop our ears unto all that carnal or corrupt reason can suggest against the truth of them; for being to deliver some mysterious truths above the reach of natural understanding, he premitteeth this, that they had divine authority for them, and therefore should have credit: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord," saith he.

3. The Lord Christ shall never want a church of believers upon earth, which in despite of Satan's malice to the contrary shall still have a being, either more conspicuously, Isa. ii. 2, or more hidly, Rev. xii. 6, in some one place or other, until Christ's second coming: for Paul sheweth there will be some believers "alive, and remaining until the coming of the Lord."

4. The Lord Christ, who is now absent in his human nature and bodily presence in heaven from us, Acts iii. 21, shall again return, and at the last day be present with us; and this not only in his power and virtue, as he is present with believers always, Matt. xxviii. 20, but as God and man in both his natures. His very human nature shall be brought down from heaven with

him, and every eye shall see him, Rev. i. 7; for the word rendered "coming" doth signify a presence in his being and essence, and not his power only: "Unto the coming of the Lord."

5. The great advantage which our godly friends who die in the Lord shall receive themselves by death, should allay our excessive sorrow for their removal, notwithstanding any loss which doth thereby redound unto us; otherwise our grief is but selfish, and carrieth in it but a small regard to their happiness; for Paul, in this and the following verse, doth labour to allay their immoderate grief, because their deceased friends received no prejudice, but great advantage by their death: "We which are alive shall not prevent them which are asleep."

VER. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

This verse doth, first, hold forth the glorious and terrible manner, wherein Christ himself in his bodily presence (see ver. 15, Doct. 4.) shall descend from heaven to judge the world: he shall come with great majesty, as kings do enter their royal cities, with such solemnity, as great judges do set themselves upon the bench, or with such terror as generals of armies do join battle with the enemy: for the several things attributed to his coming in this verse have in them allusions to all those. But more particularly he shall come "with a shout," the most probable meaning is, that he himself shall give the word of command both to dead and quick to compare at his bar; which command of his shall be proclaimed by an archangel, that is, some one or other chief angel, whose proclamation shall be confirmed by sound of trumpet, or with some formidable martial-like voice as of a trumpet; called the last trump, 1 Cor. xv. 52, because none shall sound after it; and the "trump of God" here, because it shall ratify the command come forth from God, and shall sound so loud as it will be heard far and near, even by those who are in the graves, John v. 28, and depths of the seas, Rev. xx. 13, for the excellency of a thing useth to be set forth by this epithet, as the trees of God, Psa. civ. 16. Next, the order wherein the "dead in Christ," that is, in the faith of Christ, shall rise, is set down positively, "they shall rise first," that is, before those who are alive shall partake of that glorious change mentioned, 1 Cor. xv. 51, which shall be to them in place of the resurrection.

DOCTRINES.

1. The will of God is the supreme cause of every thing which falleth out, wherein, being once known, we ought to acquiesce without farther inquiry: for Paul giving a reason, as it appears by the causal particle "for," why the living shall not prevent them which sleep, he rests on God's will, voice, and command, enjoining the dead to rise first: "For the Lord himself," saith he, "shall descend," &c.

2. The Lord Christ in his bodily presence is now contained in heaven, and not upon earth; for if he were already upon earth, as the ubiquitaries, and maintainers of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper do affirm, he could not be said properly to descend to it when he cometh to judgment, but so saith the apostle here: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven."

3. Christ's second coming at the last day to judge the quick and dead, (2 Tim. iv. 1.) shall be attended with so great state and royal majesty, for the terror of reprobates, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, and comfort and glory of the elect, 2 Thess. i. 10, that all the terror, majesty, and dreadful reverence, which hath been ever seen upon earth are but poor empty shadows of it, and come far short of the thing itself: he shall come accompanied with a thousand times ten thousand of his glorious angels, Jude 14, by his mighty power shaking heaven and earth, Matt. xxiv. 29, and by the power of his trumpet raising the dead out of their graves, Matt. xxiv. 31, and presenting them all at his seat of judgment, Rev. xx. 12; for though it be safest to decline all such high-flown scholastic speculations, and peremptory determinations, about the nature of this shout, voice, and trumpet here spoken of, as are usually tossed among the schoolmen, yet this much may be safely affirmed, that those expressions do shadow forth the dreadfulness, terror, and majesty of Christ's second coming, by allusions to the most dreadful and majestic spectacles that ever were, are, or shall be seen upon earth: "He shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

4. As there is probable ground from Scripture to affirm, that there are some orders and degrees of dignity among the blessed angels, some being superior, and some being inferior: so all of them even the chiefest not excepted, are not thought too good, neither by the Lord Christ, nor yet themselves, to be employed one way or other for the honour of Christ, Godman, Mediator, in helping forward the salvation of believers: for he mentioneth here an archangel, or chief angel, distinct from Christ, and sheweth that he with many thousands of others, (Jude 14; Matt. xxiv. 31.) shall be employed at the last day, about the work of gathering the elect out of their graves, to meet with the Lord Christ: "He shall descend with the voice of the archangel," saith he.

5. It is the Lord's ordinary way of dealing with his children, to recompense their disadvantages wherein they seem to be cast behind others, with some one or other advantage or privilege, wherein they outstrip those, who in other things did seem to have the advantage of them; that so there may be an equality in his way, even where it seemeth most unequal, 2 Cor. viii. 14, for it might seem some prerogative unto those who will be found alive at Christ's coming, that they shall not taste of death, 1 Cor. xv. 51, above the lot of others who must die, and their bodies be turned in ashes ere then. But behold those others shall be recompensed in this their seeming disadvantage, by being first glorified in their bodies before the then living shall be changed,

though it be most probable there shall be no considerable difference of time, 1 Cor. xv. 52. "The dead in Christ shall rise first," saith he.

VER. 17. Then we which are alive *and* remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Here are a fourth and fifth head of the above-mentioned doctrine, concerning what shall befall the godly after death, being now raised: which serve also for two further grounds of consolation. The first of those is, that then, to wit, after the dead in Christ shall rise, the godly then "alive" and "remaining" upon earth, being first changed and their bodies in a moment of time made conformable unto Christ's glorious body, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, Phil. iii. 21; they shall then "together" with those who have arisen, "be caught up," and that in the twinkling of an eye, (as the word implieth, and other Scriptures express, 1 Cor. xv. 52,) and caught up "in the clouds," which shall serve as chariots in which the saints shall be carried up "into the air," as is said of Elias, 2 Kings ii. 11, and of Christ, Acts i. 9; and the end of their being caught up there is to "meet the Lord," upon his way descending from heaven to judge the world, and to serve unto him, as his glorious train, Jude 14, and for his assessors in the act of passing judgment, 1 Cor. vi. 2. The second of those heads is the great glory which all believers of both sorts shall enjoy with Christ after that, "they shall be with him so," to wit, in that glorious manner both in soul and body, and this for "ever," without any change unto all eternity.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whatever may be the circumstantial privileges of some believers beyond others, at and after Christ's second coming; yet none of them shall come short in any thing which is required to the essence and being of complete and soul-satisfying happiness: for having said, "the dead in Christ shall arise first," ver. 16, he sheweth here, that both quick and dead "together shall meet the Lord, and be for ever with him."

2. Though death doth make a sad separation among the godly, depriving some of the many sweet and rare advantages which they enjoyed by the society of others; yet herein lieth a choice cordial for comfort against all excessive sorrow arising thence, that ere it be long there shall be a joyful and comfortable meeting, not only one of them with another, but all of them with Christ at his second coming: for the apostle's scope is to comfort them against immoderate sorrow, from that consideration: "Then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord," saith he.

3. There shall be a glorious change wrought at Christ's second coming in the bodies of the elect from what they now are, though not in their substance and proportion of members, Job xix. 26, 27, yet in their qualities; and particularly as in other things, (see Phil. iii. 20, Doct. 11,) so

in this, whereas our bodies are now earthy, lumpish and heavy, tending downwards, they shall then be, in a kind, spiritual, 1 Cor. xv. 44, active and nimble, so that they shall be easily and without all hurt caught up on a sudden, or made to mount up as birds, "to meet the Lord Christ in the air," as is here affirmed.

4. However the godly, while here upon earth, do frequently, through error of judgment, Acts xv. 37, 38, love to self-interest, Phil. ii. 2, with 4, and prevalency of some one corruption or other, 1 Cor. iii. 3, run contrary courses, rend asunder, and strive to counter-work one another; yet when they meet with Christ at his second coming, all such alienation and distance shall be removed: they shall then be perfectly one, as the Father and Christ are one, John xvii. 21, 22. Their different judgments, exasperated passions, their contrary desires, shall no more be to divide them, or keep them asunder: for then, saith Paul, "we shall all be caught up together to meet the Lord."

5. Though it will be doubtless no small comfort unto the godly, at Christ's second coming, to have a comfortable meeting of their old acquaintance, with whom they prayed and wept and suffered, and of all the eminent ancient believers that ever were, Matt. viii. 11, and to have perfect union in judgment, in heart, in affection, in one and the same song of praise with all those, Rev. xiv. 1—3, yet the height of their happiness shall not consist in this, but in their blessed meeting with, and enjoying the presence of the Lord Christ, whose glorious face and fellowship will beautify all that famous general assembly of the first-born, and make them lovely, 1 John iii. 2; and without whom even the fellowship of glorified saints, or heaven itself, could not be satisfactory: for he makes their happiness to consist not so much in this that they are caught up together, as that they are "caught up to meet the Lord, and so shall ever be with him."

6. As there is an unspeakable fulness of satisfaction in the enjoyment of Christ's presence; so that enjoyment of it which the saints shall have in heaven is a far other thing than any thing of that kind we can attain to here; our presence with him and nearness to him now, is but only in our spirits and with his Godhead, 2 Cor. v. 6, 7; it is but mediate, and through the glass of ordinances, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; it is but frequently used, Psa. xxx. 7, and no ways full, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; but then shall it be both in soul and body, Job xix. 26, 27, both with his divine and human nature, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; it shall be immediate, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, constant, Matt. xxv. 46, and so full that they who enjoy the meanest degree will find no lack, Psa. xvii. 15; for, while he saith, "they shall be ever with the Lord," so, he implieth we will be with him in another manner than we are now.

7. Though even the best while here on earth are so inconstant, fickle and changeable, that the long continuance of any one thing proveth wearisome, yea, and hardly can they bear much of the Lord's presence for any space of time together, and not abuse it to pride, security or carnal lightness, Psa. xxx. 6, 7, yet so great a change shall be wrought in glorified saints, that the long continuance of Christ's blessed presence without

any interruption shall neither breed satiety and loathing, nor yet be abused by them; but the longer they do enjoy it the more they shall be ravished with it and delighted in it, without all fainting or remitting of their happiness unto all eternity: for he saith, "we shall be ever with the Lord."

VER. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

He doth here apply the forementioned doctrine, by expressing one main use which he would have them to improve it for, which is, that not only each of them should thence draw matter of comfort unto themselves, but also administrate "comfort" by "these words," that is, the preceding doctrine, "unto others," especially to such as were under affliction and grief for the death of near and godly friends.

DOCTRINES.

1. As there is no religious truth so merely doctrinal, but it may be improved for some good practical use; so then do ministers preach, and people learn aright, those doctrinal truths about the nature of God his attributes, about Christ his person, natures and offices, about the resurrection, Christ's second coming and life eternal, when their great and furthest design, is not to inform the judgment only in the knowledge of those truths, but also to rectify the affections by pressing some practical use, and the performance of some one duty or other upon them: for Paul doth handle some of these truths, which are as doctrinal and fall as little under our practice as any other, by pressing upon them thence a practical duty, even to draw comfort from these truths for allaying excessive sorrow: "Wherefore comfort one another," saith he, "with these words."

2. As we are not to look upon the afflictions of others as of no concernment to us, seeing we are yet in the body, Heb. xiii. 3, and may suffer what others now feel, but as upon a call from God to several duties and to more work than we formerly had: so this is one special piece of work to which we are hereby called, even to prove comfortable unto those whom the Lord hath wounded, that being one end why the Lord doth minister comfort unto ourselves, 2 Cor. i. 4; for Paul shows that the afflictions of others did call them to this duty, and therefore he enjoins them, "comfort one another."

3. As this duty of ministering comfort unto those whom the Lord hath wounded is incumbent not only unto public ministers, but also unto private Christians in a private way, so it ought to be mutual; and therefore as a man would have matter of comfort and not affliction added unto his grief from others, he should labour to be comfortable unto others himself; for he enjoineth this duty to be gone about by all, and mutually: "Wherefore comfort one another," saith he.

4. The best and choicest of comforts, for supporting the spirits of men under afflictions of any sort, are those which are laid up in Scrip-

ture, and pertinently drawn from thence with a prudent application of them to the case in hand; there being no afflicted case to which a comfortable, full and (through God's blessing) an effectual cure is not to be found in Scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 15—17, and all other comforts not drawn from thence, being either vain and naught, Isa. lv. 2, or a salve much narrower than the sore, Prov. xviii. 14; for he bids "comfort one another with these words," to wit, those scriptural comforts which he had presently written.

CHAPTER V.

THE apostle, in the first part of this chapter, doth persist in the former digression, about Christ's second coming, showing the time appointed for it could not be known, ver. 1: which he confirmeth first, from their own knowledge of its unexpectedness, ver. 2; and secondly, from the terrible and unexpected judgment, which shall then come upon secure reprobates, ver. 3, against the terrors whereof he doth confirm the godly, ver. 4, 5.

In the second part of the chapter he presseth the exercise of several virtues: as first, of watchfulness and sobriety, ver. 6, because the contrary vices are works of darkness and ignorance, ver. 7, from which they were mercifully delivered, ver. 8. Secondly, of faith, love, and hope, ver. 8, to the last whereof especially, he doth encourage them from the certainty of salvation hoped for, because of God's decree, ver. 9, and the Mediator's purchase, ver. 10. Thirdly, he exhorteth all to the duties of mutual edification, ver. 11; and fourthly, the people to acknowledge, and respect, their ministers, ver. 12, 13; and all to live peaceably, ver. 13; and sixthly, to administer with patience a suitable remedy to three several sorts of spiritual diseases, ver. 14; seventhly to abstain from private revenge, ver. 15; eighthly, to entertain a cheerful frame of spirit under all dispensations, ver. 16; ninthly, to be much in the duty of prayer, ver. 17; and tenthly, of thanksgiving, as being well pleasing to God, ver. 18; eleventhly, not to quench, but to cherish the gifts and motions of God's Spirit, ver. 19; and twelfthly, in order hereto, not to despise, but highly esteem the public preaching of God's word, ver. 20; and thirteenthly, to try what doctrines they hear, and after trial, to hold what is sound, ver. 21; and lastly, to eschew whatsoever hath any rational appearance of sin, ver. 22.

In the last part of the chapter he concludes the epistle: first, by prayer, for their growth and perseverance in sanctification, ver. 23; secondly, by a promise, assuring them that God would answer his prayer, ver. 24; thirdly, by recommending unto them, first, to pray for him, ver. 25; secondly, to salute all their church-members in his name, ver. 26; thirdly, to communicate this epistle unto them all, ver. 27; and fourthly, he concludeth with his ordinary farewell wish, ver. 28.

VER. 1. But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

The apostle, foreseeing that some curious heads might haply, from what he had presently written of the resurrection and Christ's coming to judgment, take occasion to inquire when should those things be? he doth divert them from all such inquiries, by showing that "as to the times," that is, the year, month, or day of Christ's coming, or as to the determinate seasons of those times, whether he should come in summer or winter, by day or by night, at morning, evening or midnight, (see Mark xiii. 32, 35,) "it was not needful for him to write unto them" any thing to that purpose: where more is understood than expressed, to wit, that it was impossible to know either the time or season of his coming (as the reason used ver. 2, doth prove) and therefore it was but vain curiosity for any to inquire concerning it.

Hence learn, 1. The written word of God is so contrived, that as nothing necessary to be known for our incitement to duty and direction in the way to salvation is therein omitted, 2 Tim. iii. 15; so our vain curiosity to know other things, the knowledge whereof is not so necessary, but would rather prove unprofitable and hurtful, is not in the least measure thereby satisfied; for it is written, chap. iv. 16, that Christ shall come, and the manner and effects of his coming, the knowledge of all which is necessary, but as to the peremptory time when he should come, the apostle declineth to write of it, and that because the knowledge of it was not needful: "But," saith he, "of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write."

2. It hath pleased the Lord, in his deep wisdom and mercy, to conceal and keep secret the definite time of Christ's second coming to judgment, that hereby the Lord's people may be taught to watch, and to keep their hearts always ready and prepared for it, Matt. xxiv. 42; for the expression, "ye have no need that I write of the times," implieth they could not be known or written of.

3. So presumptuously bold is the wit of man, when not sanctified and better employed, as to dare to pry into the most profound of God's secrets; and more particularly, to search out and determine the peremptory time, longer or shorter, of Christ's second coming, the knowledge whereof God only wise hath reserved to himself alone, Matt. xxiv. 36; for Paul supposeth there would be such curious inquiries, both in that and in the following ages, and therefore laboureth to divert the godly from them, while he saith, "of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write."

4. The servants of Christ are wisely to divert the Lord's people from all such curious inquiries, as being a result of Satan's policy, thereby to withdraw them from the knowledge and study of necessary and revealed truths, 1 Tim. vi. 4; and more especially, they ought to divert from those inquiries which are about the peremptory time of Christ's second coming, seeing the know-

ledge thereof not only is impossible, but also would prove unprofitable and hurtful, as tending to make the world in all ages preceding that wherein he should come more secure and careless: for so doth Paul here suppress all such curious inquiries, while he saith, "but of the times and seasons, ye need not that I write unto you."

VER. 2. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

He gives a reason to prove the impossibility of knowing when Christ shall come (whereof ver. 1.) Because they "themselves know perfectly" and exactly, as having it plainly revealed by Christ himself while here on earth, Matt. xxiv. 42, that "the day of the Lord," that is, the day of Christ's second coming, so called, because he shall then come as Lord, to judge the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. iv. 1, they knew, I say, that this "day cometh," in the present time, that is, hasteneth to come, Rev. xxii. 20, and shall come "as a thief in the night," that is, suddenly and unexpectedly, whether by night or by day, as the thief who gives not warning before he comes to steal. See the same similitude used to show that Christ shall come unawares and unexpectedly, Matt. xxiv. 43, 44; Rev. iii. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 10, whence he leaves unto them to gather that it is not possible to know the time and season of his coming.

DOCTRINES.

1. However in points of truth not clearly revealed, and those which are not of such absolute necessity to salvation, the Lord's people may live in suspense without determining themselves peremptorily either to the one hand or the other, Acts i. 7; yet it is their duty, and will be in some measure aimed at by them, to have the exact knowledge of necessary truths, and of such as are most clearly revealed: for this truth, about the unexpectedness of Christ's second coming, was necessary, and clearly revealed, and therefore they knew it perfectly or exactly.

2. So ready are we to forget, even those truths which we perfectly know, under a violent fit of some temptation, and when we need to remember them most, Heb. xii. 5, that the Lord's ministers must not think it wholly unnecessary, but sometimes profitable, to inculcate of new upon the Lord's people, and put them in remembrance of those truths which they already know: for though they knew perfectly, "that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night," yet he doth here tell them of it, and inculcates it, ver. 3.

3. It is but a groundless dream, and antiscipitural opinion, maintained by some of the ancients, and now by the Papists, that the antichrist mentioned in Scripture shall be an individual person, who shall have his rise in the world precisely three years and a half before Christ's second coming; for if so, then at that time the very month and day of Christ's coming to judgment should be exactly known, the contrary whereof is here affirmed, to wit, "that the day

of the Lord cometh" unexpectedly, and "as a thief in the night."

4. So great should be our desire to profit in knowledge and sanctified practice, and our skill and dexterity to improve all occurrences for that end should be such, as to bring meat out of the eater, and from the worst of sinful examples to learn somewhat tending, either by way of resemblance or otherways, to clear or confirm spiritual truths to the understanding, and to enforce the practice of some spiritual duty upon the will and affections, Luke xviii. 1, &c.; for the apostle takes occasion to clear this necessary truth, and to enforce the duty of watchfulness following upon it, ver. 6, from the sinful practice of a thief, who cometh unexpectedly in the night to his prey.

VER. 3. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

He doth here, first, both clear what was meant by the former similitude, to wit, the unexpectedness of Christ's second coming; and also prove that it shall be unexpected, from the terrible effects thereof, to wit, sudden and unexpected destruction, and that both of soul and body; (as the word is usually taken, see 2 Thess. i. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 9;) which destruction shall come, or, as the word signifieth, at unawares surprise the wicked (for of those only he meaneth, as ver. 4, doth clear) who at that time shall be arrived at such a height of carnal security as to say, that is, not only secretly promise unto themselves in their heart, *Psa. xiv. 1*, but also openly declare, if not by their mouth, yet by their deeds, (for men do speak also by these, *Tit. i. 16*), that they have no fear of approaching judgment, and do look for nothing but continued "peace and safety," that is, full immunity (as his using two words to one sense doth imply) from any trouble of that sort in their sinful course. Next, he gives some properties of this destruction, first, in a similitude of the pains and "travail of a woman with child," which, besides the unexpectedness and suddenness of it, as to the hour and moment of time wherein it shall come, whereof already, holds forth the horrible pain and torment of it, the pains of a woman in childbirth being most sharp, exquisite, and for the time almost not supportable. Secondly, in plain and proper terms, he shows it shall be inevitable, "they shall not escape." In the original the negation is doubled, which according to the property of that language denieth most strongly, as if he had said, there shall be no imaginary possibility to get it shifted, so that their destruction shall be first, sudden; secondly, painful; and thirdly, inevitable.

DOCTRINES.

1. As sin continued in begetteth carnal security, and draweth the sinner at length to misbelieve and despise whatever the word of the Lord doth threaten against him for it, *Deut. xxix. 19*; so a height of security, and atheistical contempt of divine threatenings, is an infallible mark of a

wicked, godless, and unrenewed heart: for so much doth he teach while he speaks not of the wicked expressly, but only describes them from their height of security, which long continuance in sin should at length drive them to, as from an infallible evidence of a wicked man: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety."

2. There is not any one more speaking evidence of approaching judgment of one kind or other, than carnal security in sin, and wickedness arrived to such a height, as to make men wholly fearless of God's judgment, and atheistical mockers at all threatenings which forewarn them of it: for saith he, "when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh."

3. Whatever grounds of confidence, or undoubted persuasion flowing from those grounds, a wicked man may have to escape a threatened judgment, yet all shall serve to little purpose, when God beginneth in earnest to reckon with him; his strongest fancy, with all its grounds, will prove but a weak bulwark to bear off the overflowing waves of divine wrath, when the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place, *Isa. xxviii. 17*; for the word rendered "safety" implies they should have a certain persuasion of safety as if they were above all doubt, and this doubtless upon some grounds satisfactory to themselves, and yet for all that, even "then sudden destruction shall come upon them," and at unawares surprise them.

4. As a lingering death hath in it much of mercy even to wicked men, who have thereby time and leisure given them to repent, and to plead with God for mercy, *Rev. ii. 21*; so of all deaths or ways of calling sinners to an account, those which are sudden and make quick despatch are to a wicked liver most dangerous, as hardly leaving any place either for God's patience or man's repentance; but making an end of the person stricken before he can solidly think upon his end: for he placeth a great part of the terror of the destruction threatened, in that it should be sudden and unexpected: "Then sudden destruction cometh upon them."

5. Though none can know the peremptory day, month or year of Christ's second coming, see ver. 1, Doct. 2, yet there are certain signs from which, when they shall fall out, a man may certainly know that the day of the Lord is near approaching, such as these, a general height of carnal security, *Matt. xxiv. 38, 39*; the conversion of the Jews, *Rom. xi. 15*; and total destruction of the antichrist, *2 Thess. ii. 8*; for besides other things, so much may be implied in this similitude, whereby Christ's second coming and the destruction of the wicked which doth accompany it are compared "to travail upon a woman with child," who though she know not the very day and hour when her pains shall take her, yet she hath certain signs whereby to know that her time approacheth.

6. The pain and horror which the day of the Lord shall bring on godless reprobates is such, that no tongue can utter, nor can it be expressed in proper terms so as we might conceive it, yea and such, as the greatest of all earthly torments are but weak shadows and slender representa-

tions of it, and too little to express it: for therefore doth the Spirit of God, always while speaking of this destruction, make use of borrowed similitudes from the most terrible of earthly and bodily torments, as of those occasioned by fire, Mark ix. 45; by fire of brimstone, Rev. xxi. 8; by an eating worm never dying, Mark ix. 46; and here the pains and torment of a woman in travail; all which doubtless come far short of expressing to the full that pain and torment which is incomparable, incomprehensible, and cannot be expressed, but by such shadows and representations.

7. Even damned souls and the most profane and lawless of godless reprobates, are not only overruled by and under the dominion of a Divine Providence, but shall also know so much by sad experience when in the great day, nill they will they, they shall appear before their dreadful Judge and receive their sad and woful sentence from his blessed mouth, and be presently made without all delay or shifting to undergo it: for saith Paul, "they shall not escape."

VER. 4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Lest the godly should be terrified, and shaken with the apprehension and fear of that sudden destruction presently mentioned, he doth here cast in a seasonable word of comfort for all such, against the terror of it, as appeareth from his entrance made to the present purpose, with an adversative particle "but." And first, he propoundeth the ground of the following comfort, namely, that they, to wit, as many of them to whom he writeth as were sincere believers in Jesus Christ (for so must this indefinite compellation, and that note of universality also, ver. 5, be understood according to the use of Scripture elsewhere, 1 Cor. xv. 22.) none such, I say, were in darkness, that is, they were not living in their gross and natural ignorance of God, nor yet in carnal security or godless profanity; for the word "darkness" doth point at both those here, as elsewhere in Scripture, Rom. ii. 19; 1 John i. 6. Next, he expresseth the comfort itself flowing from this ground, to this purpose, that however the precise day and time of Christ's second coming could not be known by them, no more than by the wicked, Matt. xxiv. 36; yet it should not overtake them, or (as the word implieth) violently apprehend them to their hurt and prejudice, as a thief and robber doth apprehend the person and goods of those whom he spoils and destroyeth. Now the force of the inference, whereby he draweth the present consolation from the forementioned ground, doth lie in the similitude; take it thus, that as a thief can only do hurt to those who are sleeping securely in the dark night, and not to others: so this terrible day could do no hurt to them, because it should not find them lying secure in the dark night of ignorance or impiety.

DOCTRINES.

1. The truly godly, and they to whom the terrible threatenings of eternal judgment do least be-

long, are of such a tender frame and temper of heart, Isa. lxvi. 2, that usually they are most affected, saddened and discouraged by them, when godless livers, to whom they properly appertain, are so little moved with them that they rather mock them, 2 Pet. iii. 4; for Paul did foresee so much, while presently after he had denounced sudden destruction to come upon secure reprobates, he seeth a necessity to guard the godly against the terror of it: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness," saith he.

2. It concerneth therefore the wise and faithful servant of Christ so to denounce the terrible threatenings of everlasting wrath against the wicked, as that he presently caution them for the comfort of the godly; lest otherwise they, for whom they are not intended, be dejected, shaken and discouraged by them: for so doth Paul here guard the former threatening with a "but ye, brethren."

3. A prudent minister should labour so to guard against the terror and dejection of the godly by denounced threatenings, as the contrary comfort be not proposed absolutely unto any, but suspended upon such conditions as are required in the promise, that so the party who would have comfort may not be deceived, but put himself to a fair trial by those marks, if he be one of those to whom the intended comfort doth belong; for Paul being to comfort the godly against that terrible destruction, threatened ver. 3, he mentions the condition upon which they might escape it, to wit, if "they were not in darkness," which he affirmeth of them all, or of a great many of them, at least in the judgment of charity, and thereby leaveth it unto themselves to search if they were so in reality: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you."

4. As the truly godly and real believers in Jesus Christ are freed, at least, from the gross darkness of their natural ignorance and godless profanity; and as to be lying under either of those doth argue a man to be yet in his unrenewed state; so the best security which a man can promise to himself against the terror of sudden and unexpected strokes, doth lie in his saving knowledge of God in Christ, and in the testimony of a good conscience arising from the shining light of an honest and holy life: for Paul affirms it universally of all real believers, "they are not in darkness," either of gross ignorance or godless profanity, and maketh that their ground of comfort to secure them, "that the day of the Lord should not overtake them as a thief."

VER. 5. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

He insists upon the former ground of comfort, first, by proving the truth of it, that they were not in darkness, because they were children of light, that is, (according to an usual Hebraism, Matt. xi. 19,) they were not only endued with saving knowledge and holiness (both which in Scripture go under the name of light, John iii. 19; Matt. v. 16,) but also were regenerate and

born of God, 1 John ii. 29, who is that light, inaccessible, 1 Tim. vi. 16, by the preaching of the word, James i. 18, which also hath the name of light, Psa. cxix. 105; and they are called "children of the light and of the day," to show that the light of knowledge and holiness, wherewith they were endued, was not a dark glimmering light, as of a candle or twilight, but most clear, as the light of the full and perfect day; and this as it seems, in opposition to that lesser measure of light which was enjoyed under the Old Testament; see upon Gal. iv. 3, Doct. 2, and ver. 5, Doct. 3. Secondly, by illustration of the proof, while he removeth from them the contrary, not only gross ignorance and profanity under the name of "night," but also a comparative measure of those, under the name of "darkness."

DOCTRINES.

1. As souls affrighted with the terror of God, are often most averse from receiving the comforts allowed to them of God; so the Lord's ministers may not grow weary of taking pains to clear their doubts, and work them up to the embracing of them: for Paul supposing the godly might possibly not have closed with the propounded comfort at the first hearing, doth here insist upon it: "Ye are all the children of light."

2. As the doubts of discouraged and afflicted Christians are not so much about the reality of the comfort itself held forth by the word, for a suitable cure to their disconsolate case, as about their own interest in that comfort and right to lay hold upon it; so a minister in dealing with such would not so much, or only insist in propounding and urging a suitable comfort, as in clearing up unto them and pressing upon them to make sure work of their interest in it, and right to lay hold upon it: for Paul supposing that their doubt would lie about their not being in darkness, which he held forth as the ground and evidence of their interest in the comfort, doth insist mainly in the clearing of that, while he saith, "ye are all the children of light," &c.

3. The kingdoms of light and darkness, of saving knowledge and dark ignorance, of grace and profanity, of Christ and Belial, of God and the devil, are so much inconsistent that they cannot coincide in one and the same person; neither can any man be a subject of both kingdoms at one and the same time: for the apostle maketh the denial of the one to follow upon the affirmation of the other: "We are all the children of light," saith he, "we are not of the night or of darkness."

4. The minister of Christ ought so to deliver suitable truths unto the Lord's people for their incitement to duty, for their comfort against discouragements, for their reproof or conviction, as that he takes his own allowed share and portion of those truths unto himself, as if he were an ordinary hearer; otherwise he cannot both save himself and them who hear him, according to the promise, 1 Tim. iv. 16; for Paul doth change the person, in the close of the verse, and takes a share of what he distributes to others unto himself, both here and in the following verses: "We are not of the night and of darkness," saith he.

VER. 6. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

The apostle, having now put a close to his digression, about the state of believers after death and Christ's second coming, which he entered upon, chap. iv. ver. 15, doth again return to press upon them some other branches of that sanctification required by God, and spoken of chap. iv. ver. 3. And first, from what he hath presently said of the unexpectedness of Christ's second coming, he exhorteth to the exercise of two virtues, tending much to keep them in a readiness for that day, to wit, watchfulness and sobriety. And he presseth them, first, by forbidding them the contrary vices, under the name of "sleeping as others," to wit, as ungodly men, children of darkness: where by "sleeping" is not meant "sleep" properly taken, and of the body, binding the outward senses, so that for the time they cease to do their office, for this sleep being moderately taken is allowed by God, and given by him as a blessing, Psa. cxxvii. 2, and some who, it is like, will be found sleeping thus at the last day shall be saved, Luke xvii. 34; although excess even of bodily sleep be a sin, Prov. xxiv. 33, and may be here in the second place looked at, either as a cause, concomitant, or effect of that spiritual sleep here forbidden, which is no other than that deep sleep of carnal security, whereby all the spiritual senses of a man, who is taken with it, are bound up, Matt. xiii. 15, so that he regards not his duty, Matt. xxv. 3, 5, is wholly fearless of threatened judgments, Deut. xxix. 19, and besotteth himself with such contentments and pleasures as he can find in this present life, Luke xii. 16—18; in which sense this word is used, Mark xiii. 36; Eph. v. 14. And he presseth them next, by enjoining the exercise of the virtues themselves: and first, that they should "watch," whereby he doth not so much mean watchfulness of the body, though that be also sometimes very necessary, and therefore required by Christ, Matt. xxvi. 4, as spiritual watchfulness, and of the mind, whereby the man endued with it hath all his inward and spiritual senses free and exercised, Matt. xiii. 16, so that he doth not only know and discern the voice of God in his word and dispensations calling him to every duty, Hab. ii. 1, but also is intent upon it, Psa. cxix. 32, careful to take up, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3, and guard against such temptations as would divert him from it, Matt. xvi. 23, or ensnare him in the contrary sin, Matt. xxvi. 41, and is always making ready how to meet comfortably with God in any future dispensation of mercy or terror, Job iii. 25, 26. Secondly, that they should be sober, whereby he enjoineth not only sobriety and temperance (strictly taken) in the moderate and sober use of meat and drink, Eccl. x. 17, but more largely also, as it moderates, and boundeth our affections in the pursuit and use of all things earthly, 1 Cor. vii. 29—31, for not only excess of wine, but the cares of this world, and the prevalency of any other lust, have an inebriating virtue, disturbing the reason and oppressing the senses, see Luke xxi. 34.

DOCTRINES.

1. Ministers should so press the faith of privileges, and use-making of allowed comforts upon the Lord's people, and people should so improve their privileges and comforts, as that neither of them be abused for a sleeping pillow to foster negligence, but both of them improved as incitements to duty: and comforts should be so minded as duty be not neglected; otherwise the most comfortable promises will prove but dry breasts, seeing the Lord's ordinary way is to enliven comforts unto his people, when they are most diligent in the way of their duty, Dan. ix. 20, 21. For Paul having asserted their privilege of being freed from darkness, and inferred thence their comfort that the terror of that day should not overtake them, ver. 4, 5, he draweth an argument from both, to incite them to their duty, "therefore," saith he, "let us not sleep."

2. The undoubted certainty of divine promises, made to believers for their preservation from judgment and wrath, do no ways of themselves tend to cherish neglect of duty, but rather to excite them to greater diligence, as that which is a mean appointed of God for furthering the promise to an accomplishment, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. For Paul having given to believers among them a most undoubted promise that the terror of that day should not apprehend them to their hurt, ver. 5, he inferreth thence, "therefore let us not sleep."

3. A possibility to meet with a sudden stroke and unexpected trial, hath in it a call and voice unto the Lord's people to shake off security and laziness, and be upon their guard, lest they be suddenly taken and surprised by it; for, from what he spoke also, ver. 23, of that sudden unexpected coming of the day of the Lord, he inferreth here; "Therefore let us not sleep."

4. Then do we make a good use of bad examples, when we so look on them as not to imitate them, but to scare us from the like, while we hate, abhor, and detest them; for he proposes the example of other secure sinners as a reason to dissuade them from the like: "Let not us sleep, as do others."

5. The wise Lord doth sometimes exercise his people by propounding to them a possible hazard of meeting with an unexpected trial, with which he doth not intend ever to essay them; and this in mercy to them, that the apprehension of an uncertain hazard may put them upon the exercise of some piece of necessary duty, which otherwise would possibly have been neglected: for Christ's unexpected coming, mentioned ver. 2, 3, was not to fall out in their time, and yet it is held out unto them as a thing possible, the good whereof is here expressed, even that thereby they might be excited to the exercise of sobriety and watchfulness; "Therefore let us watch and be sober."

6. As a man who would make conscience to exercise any grace and virtue, must set himself to abandon the contrary vice; so the work of thorough and full mortification of any sin is then carried on to purpose when we do not rest upon a bare surceasing from it, but set about the practice of the contrary duty; for in pressing the

exercise of those virtues, he forbids the contrary vices, and while he forbiddeth security he exhorts them to exercise the contrary virtues; "Let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober."

7. The exercise of these two graces, watchfulness and sobriety, do best together, and hardly can be separated the one from the other; in so far, as an unsober heart overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, cannot discharge the duties of watchfulness mentioned in the exposition; and an unwatchful heart that is not intent upon duty, and guarding against temptations contrary to it, cannot choose but be ensnared by the subtle and alluring temptations of worldly pleasures and advantage, Mal. ii. 15, 16, and to exceed the bounds of moderation in the pursuit and use of things earthly, Luke xxi. 34, and consequently prove unsober: for therefore doth the Spirit of God, not only here but elsewhere, enjoin the exercise of those two virtues; "Let us watch and be sober."

VER. 7. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.

8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober.

Here is a reason to enforce the former exhortation, to wit, because sleep and drunkenness are the works of darkness, for going about whereof, men do usually (if they be not all the more sluggish and enslaved to their lusts, Jer. vi. 15), choose the night season. The truth of which reason doth hold whether we take the words to mean of "sleep, drunkenness, and night," properly so called, or if we take them improperly as they were formerly expounded, ver. 4—6; for hardly will any other than they who are in the night of their natural darkness and unrenewed state, give themselves to the deep sleep of carnal security and to spiritual drunkenness, or an over-burdening and besotting themselves with the cares and pleasures of this present life, 1 Thess. iv. 5: this is ver. 7, whence he infers that seeing they "were of the day," that is, delivered from the dark night of their natural ignorance, born of God, and endued with the most clear light of saving knowledge and holiness, as was affirmed, ver. 5, that therefore in very common honesty, they behaved to shun those works of darkness, and live in the exercise of Christian sobriety, and consequently of watchfulness also, the one of which graces cannot be separate in exercise from the other; see ver. 6, Doct. 7. This is ver. 8.

DOCTRINES.

1. Things lawful and allowed should be gone about in their convenient season which God and nature hath allotted for them; and the wrong timing of a thing in itself allowed, may make it be imputed unto us for sin; for taking the words in their proper sense, he shows that the time in which men do usually take their sleep, as most convenient for it, is the night and not the day; "For they that sleep, sleep in the night."

2. As the Lord hath left some common principles of conscience, modesty, and common honesty, imprinted by nature upon the hearts of men, to serve for a restraint unto them from arriving at the utmost height of sin and wickedness at the first, and while through custom of sinning they be either weakened or extinguished; so when men do openly avow their sin and profanity, and transgress all bounds of modesty and common honesty, it speaks them arrived at a greater height of sin and wickedness than was usual to be found among the grossest of pagans; for they were not so shameless as to avow their drunkenness, but being restrained somewhat by modesty and respect to common honesty, were only "drunken in the night."

3. As an unrenewed man is a very prey to the most shameless of temptations which Satan is pleased to assault him with, or to enslave him by; so the sin of gross ignorance of God, and the way to heaven, is that which exposeth the unrenewed man most to be preyed upon without resistance by any other sin; for taking the words improperly, he makes the man unrenewed who is in the night, to be enslaved to carnal security, intemperance, and a kind of spiritual besottedness with things of a present life, and doth not obscurely hint at his dark ignorance, for which mainly his unrenewed state is compared to the night, as the great cause of all his slavery: "They that sleep, sleep in the night; they that are drunken, are drunken in the night."

4. A gracious state must and will be attended with gracious actions, and a holy conversation suitable unto that state; and therefore a man ought not so much to look to what others do, as to what the state of grace unto which he pretends doth call upon himself to do; for he enforces the exercise of sobriety upon them from this, that they were "of the day," in a gracious state of saving knowledge, without regarding what others who were not in that state did. "But let us," saith he, "who are of the day, be sober."

5. Though there be such a necessary connexion betwixt a gracious state and a holy conversation, yet such is our natural averseness from holiness, Rom. viii. 7; so strong an interest hath sin in the best, Rom. vii. 23; and so many are the temptations and difficulties we have to wrestle through in the way of our duty, Eph. vi. 11, 12, that even the renewed man hath need of reiterated and serious exhortations enforced by most cogent reasons to press him to it; for though he shows that their present gracious state did engage them to the exercise of sobriety, yet he exhorts them to it, and backs his exhortation by a strong reason: "But let us," saith he, "who are of the day, be sober."

VER. 8. Putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

He doth here press another branch of sanctification, to wit, that they would arm themselves for a spiritual battle, which hath also an argument implied in it to force the exercise of watchfulness and sobriety, because it was now a time of fighting, and therefore not of sleeping or im-

moderate drinking; and the pieces of armour which he bids "put on," are two, first, the "breastplate;" what this piece did serve for in the bodily armour, see upon Eph. vi. 14, and answerable to it in the Christian armour he maketh the graces "of faith and love;" what those are, see upon chap. i. ver. 3; only the ground of the present similitude is this, that as the breastplate did secure the breast, and vital parts of the body therein contained; so these two graces do secure the vital parts of the soul, and that wherein the life of a Christian doth most consist, to wit, our justification and interest in God, Rom. v. 1, together with our knowledge of it, 1 John v. 4, and a pliability of spirit to all the duties of a holy life flowing from our interest, 2 Cor. v. 14. Secondly, the "helmet," answerable to which in the Christian armour he maketh the "hope of salvation." See what this "helmet," the grace of "hope," is, and the grounds of resemblance betwixt the two, upon Eph. vi. 17. Now, although he do only reckon two pieces of the spiritual armour here, and not so many as he doth, Eph. vi. 14, yet he omits nothing requisite to defend the Christian soldier in this spiritual conflict; for where faith, love and hope are, there is no grace wanting. Neither doth he any thing superfluous, Eph. vi. 15, in showing the necessity distinctly, and the right way of improving of several graces of God's Spirit in this spiritual warfare, seeing he doth there speak of it at greater length, and holds forth the terror of our spiritual adversaries, and the several distinct temptations either more expressly or implicitly, whereby they assault us in this battle. Besides what is already observed from Eph. vi. 14, &c., upon the several pieces of the spiritual armour, and those of them in particular which are here mentioned, and the nature of that spiritual conflict and battle which they do suppose; learn further,

1. The great cause why men, pretending for heaven and happiness, do so much besot themselves with things earthly, and are so little intent upon their duty, and watchful against temptations is, their great mistake and ignorance, as if the way to heaven were easy, beset with no difficulties, and men might go to heaven with ease and sleeping; and therefore a chief incitement to sobriety and watchfulness, and to shake off security and laziness, is to set before us often all those insuperable difficulties and terrible opposition, which we are of necessity to meet with in our way to heaven and happiness; for to make them watch and be sober, he minds them of the spiritual battle which they behaved to fight: "Putting on the breastplate of faith," &c.

2. As in bodily wars, drunkards and sleepy sluggards can never be good soldiers; so secure souls that cannot watch, and unsobber spirits oppressed and entangled with an excessive weight of worldly cares or love to any other lust, will prove but cowards, and never strike a fair stroke so long as they are such, in this spiritual conflict; for so much is implied, while he joineth the exercise of watchfulness and sobriety with the right use-making of the Christian armour in this spiritual combat: "Let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith," saith he.

3. As the malice of Satan, our great adversary in this spiritual conflict, Eph. vi. 12, doth bend itself most to strike at, and destroy those things wherein the life and being of a Christian, as a Christian, doth most consist, such as his interest in Christ, right to heaven, his knowledge of those, pliable inclination to duty, his spiritual sense and motion; so the care of a Christian should run most to provide a sufficient guard for those, even the constant exercise of those three graces mentioned in the text. For he alludes to soldiers whose great care is to guard their breast, where the heart, the first fountain of life is, with a breastplate, and their head, the original of sense and motion, with an helmet: "Putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation."

4. The grace of faith is a most necessary piece of the spiritual armour, and almost of universal use to defend the Christian soldier in this spiritual conflict; for therefore doth Paul make it answer to two parts of the bodily armour, the shield, Eph. vi. 16, and the breastplate here: "Putting on the breastplate of faith."

5. The exercise of love to God and our neighbour must needs be joined with faith, otherwise faith doth prove but a useless breastplate, and of no force to secure the vital parts of a Christian in this spiritual conflict; for Paul conjoins them to make up the breastplate; "Putting on the breastplate of faith and love," saith he.

6. The believing soldier will not always meet with present performance of the good things promised upon his closing with the promise by faith; but often the Lord for wise reasons doth exercise him with long delays, Heb. xi. 13, and sometimes with contrary appearances to sense, Gen. xv. 4, 5, with xviii. 1, which Satan doth improve as subtle engines to batter down and pierce his breastplate of faith as a thing irrational, groundless, contrary to sense, and which will never attain the promised blessings, Gen. xviii. 11, 12; for if it were not thus, there should be no need of the helmet of hope as an additional part of this spiritual armour to strengthen the breastplate of faith under delayed performance. "And for an helmet the hope of salvation," saith he.

VER. 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

He doth here both more generally enforce the preceding exhortation to the exercise of watchfulness and sobriety, and to arm themselves with the forementioned graces for a spiritual combat, from God's decree of bringing the elect to eternal life, not without, but in the practice of holy duties, 2 Thess. ii. 13; and also he seemeth more particularly to give them some encouragements to exercise their hope of salvation, mentioned ver. 8, from the certainty of salvation hoped for; whereof he giveth two grounds, first, God's eternal decree whereby he had "appointed" or ordained and predestinated them (as the word is rendered, Acts xiii. 47, 1 Pet. ii. 8,) not to eternal wrath and destruction, but "to obtain

salvation." The word rendered "obtain," signifieth to purchase, or to do much about a thing to obtain it, which purchasing is here ascribed not to themselves, Tit. iii. 5, but to Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 28; and this is here given as the second prop of a Christian's hope, upon which the certainty of the elects' salvation depends, even that salvation which was ordained for them in the decree, is purchased and obtained by Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. The certainty of salvation, either in itself or to us, is so far from being in its own nature a pillow to foster security or carnal ease, that it is a strong incitement to duty, and to charge through all difficulties with courage, which we may be assaulted with in our Christian course; yea, nothing weakeneth the hands of a Christian soldier more than diffidence and distrust of success; for he holds forth the certainty of their salvation as an incitement to the forementioned duties, (and more especially to kyth [show] themselves valorous soldiers in this spiritual conflict:) "For God hath not appointed us to wrath," saith he.

2. As the elect may attain to know assuredly that they are elected, (see upon Eph. i. 4, Doct. 2,) so neither the decree of election, nor their most certain persuasion of the same, do of their own nature render them secure or remiss in duty, but rather doth strongly incline and incite them to the exercise of sobriety and watchfulness, and of all other graces, seeing this is the way resolved upon by God for bringing the eternal decree of election to an accomplishment, 2 Thess. ii. 13: for he mentions the decree of his and their election as both certain in itself, and also known to him and some among them, as a strong incitement to the exercise of all the forementioned virtues: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath."

3. So great and insuperable are those difficulties which stand in the way of the salvation even of believers, Acts xiv. 22; so strong, so numerous, and so terrible are their spiritual adversaries, Eph. vi. 12; so little is there of strength in themselves to oppose the meanness of them, 2 Cor. iii. 5; and so improbable is it, by reason of all those, that ever such as they shall be saved, that they must look above themselves, and draw the ground of their hope for salvation from God and from Christ, otherwise there can be no sure foundation for their hope to rest on: for the apostle here, while he intends to give grounds for their hope of salvation, mentioned ver. 8, doth mention only God's decree and the Mediator's purchase: "For God hath appointed us to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ."

4. As God hath not slightly proposed, but peremptorily decreed, fore-ordained, and appointed from all eternity (Eph. i. 4) the salvation of the elect, and condescended in that his eternal decree upon the very particular persons whom he intended to save, Phil. iv. 3; so there are others whom he intended not to save, but to condemn and adjudge to undergo his everlasting wrath: see this latter decree further cleared upon Eph. i. 4, Doct. 4; for he saith, "God hath appointed them to salvation, and not to wrath;" implying,

that he had appointed others to wrath, though not them.

5. Though the decree of election to salvation be peremptory and absolute, so as to exclude all possibility of its not obtaining the end proposed, Matt. xxiv. 24, yet not so as to exclude all means on Christ's part for obtaining, or on our part for attaining, Heb. xii. 14, that salvation to which the elect are ordained, seeing he hath in that same decree appointed to bring about their salvation by such and such means, 2 Thess. ii. 13: "For God hath appointed us to obtain salvation," saith he, not without means, but "by Jesus Christ."

6. Though the merits of Christ were not a cause moving God to love or elect any to salvation, for his electing love did move him to give Christ for sinners, John iii. 16, yet they are the procuring meritorious cause for the worth whereof salvation is actually bestowed upon any, they are the cause, though not of the decree, yet of bestowing the salvation decreed; for the apostle affirms the obtaining or purchasing of salvation was "by our Lord Jesus Christ."

7. As salvation could not be actually bestowed upon the elect before it was purchased, and an equivalent price paid to divine justice in satisfaction for those sins by which they had lost and fore-faulted it, Heb. ix. 15; so neither they themselves, nor any mere creature, was able to make this purchase, or lay down the price: the redemption of the soul is precious, and ceaseth for ever, to wit, among mere creatures, Psal. xlix. 8. It was Christ alone, the second Person in the blessed Trinity, who made this purchase of lost salvation, and was designed in the same decree of election for that end. Hence, Eph. i. 4, God is said to have chosen us in Christ, which is more plainly expressed here, "He hath appointed us to obtain," or to the obtaining or purchasing of salvation, "by Jesus Christ;" implying, that the salvation for which the elect were appointed behaved to be purchased, and the purchase of it by the same appointment was put over upon him, there being no other able for it.

VER. 10. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

He illustrates the last ground of hope by showing, first, the means by which Christ did purchase salvation to the elect, and what this purchase stood him, to wit, no less than his blessed life: "he died," and that "for us," that is, in our stead, Gal. iii. 13; and, next, the end proposed by him in his death, and which is undoubtedly obtained thereby, to wit, "that we," or all the elect, of whom, ver. 9, "should live" the spiritual life of grace here, and eternal life of glory hereafter, and this whether they "wake or sleep;" which words may not be taken as ver. 6, for they who sleep securely in sin, do not live with Christ, but either properly for bodily sleeping, or watching, or rather improperly for our living, and dying this natural life or death, as 1 Thess. iv. 13. So the sense is, that no change which can befall the believer in this life, no, nor death itself, shall hinder

him to live this life, and to "live together with him," that is, by virtue of his union with Christ, and of that influence for life which floweth from his blessed face and presence.

DOCTRINES.

1. The salvation of the elect, through reason of their sin, was so deeply mortgaged, and they so far from any ground of claim unto it, that no less ransom was necessary to purchase salvation for them, than the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ; for Paul, condescending on the way how Christ did purchase salvation for the elect, saith, "he died for us, that we should live."

2. The great end and cause of Christ's death was, that, having thereby paid a sufficient ransom to provoked justice for the guilty elect, he might purchase for them that life and salvation which was formerly fore-faulted and lost; and therefore, though by his sufferings and death he did confirm the truth of the gospel, and leave us an example of patience to follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21, yet those were not the principal, much less the only, but the secondary ends of his death: for Paul sheweth that he died for this end mainly, to obtain and purchase salvation, "and that they should live together with him."

3. Then do we rightly apply the fruit of Christ's death, as to the purchase of salvation unto ourselves, when we jointly therewith draw an argument from it to resist sin, which cost our Lord so dear, and to lead a holy life, in exercising sobriety, watchfulness, and all other saving graces, as that which he so aimed at in his death; for this of Christ's dying for them may be looked upon as a further incitement to the exercise of all the forementioned virtues: "Who died for us," saith he.

4. The salvation purchased by Christ for the elect is nothing other but a reviving of them from their spiritual death, Eph. ii. 1, to that new and spiritual life which is begun here in regeneration, John iii. 3, carried on in the exercise of grace, Gal. ii. 21, and shall be afterwards completed in glory, Col. iii. 4, so that saving grace is begun salvation, and grace is no less purchased by Christ than glory itself; for, instead of saying he died that he might purchase salvation, according to his present scope, as appears from ver. 9, he saith, as the equivalent of it, "He died that we should live together with him."

5. This life of grace, begun here and perfected in glory, is the most excellent of any other life: it carrieth the name of life from any other besides, which, being compared with it, are nothing but a death; for therefore doth he give it the name of life here absolutely, and without any addition, to show what kind of life he meaneth, as if there were no other life but it only: "Who died," saith he, "that we should live with him."

6. Though this life of grace doth not exempt the elect from natural death, yet so excellent is it, that it maketh the man who hath it outlive death. Death itself, the king of terrors, shall not bereave him of it; for he supposes that the elect will die their natural death, here expressed by the name of "sleep," and yet that they shall not be bereaved of this excellent life: "That whether we wake or sleep, we should live," saith he.

7. It is the presence of Christ, and our union with him by faith here, Eph. iii. 17, and sense hereafter, 1 John iii. 2, (an union that death itself cannot dissolve, which makes us live this blessed and excellent life. It is as the soul to the body, the very life of our life, and that whereby we formally live. So that though Christ by his death did purchase this life, yet the elect do not actually enjoy it until they be united to him; for so much doth he teach, while he saith, "that we should live together with him."

VER. 11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

He doth here press a third branch of sanctification, the necessity whereof, in its subserviency to the former duties, is pointed at in the illative particle "wherefore;" and the sum of it, that they would, first, not only "comfort themselves together," as God's dealing with any did call for comfort, but also mutually exhort and incite one another to the exercise, as of all other virtues, so especially of those presently mentioned; for the word rendered "comfort," signifieth also to "exhort." And next, "edify one another," or, (as skilful and diligent masons, from whom the word is borrowed,) endeavour to advance the work of grace in others, not only by exhortation and consolation, but by all other lawful means of admonition, instruction, rebuke, reproof, or good example: and, that he may excite them to further progress in the practice of those duties, and not seem by his present exhortation to tax them of former negligence, he doth commend their present diligence in them.

DOCTRINES.

1. As all Christians of all ranks do stand in need of exhortation, consolation, and to be edified and furthered in the way of grace by all lawful means; so both pastors and people ought to make conscience of discharging all those duties; to wit, pastors, not only privately, but also publicly in the congregation, 1 Tim. v. 20, and by virtue of their particular calling, office, and authority so to do, Tit. ii. 15; private Christians, again, in private in their families, Eph. vi. 4, among their friends and neighbours, Acts xviii. 26, and by virtue of a tie of Christian charity towards all the members of the same body, 1 Cor. xii. 25. For he sheweth that every one stands in need to be exhorted, comforted, &c.; and that it is the duty of all to do so, while he saith, "Comfort," or "exhort and edify one another."

2. As the conscience-making of the forementioned duties among Christians is a singular mean to keep people in a lively watchful frame and temper of spirit, so negligence in them doth of necessity bring along with it great deadness, security, and decay of life and vigour in the exercise of any saving grace, and performance of commanded duties; for the illative particle, "therefore," sheweth that this duty is enjoined as a subservient help to the exercise of sobriety, watchfulness, faith, love, and hope, formerly pressed: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together," saith he.

3. So many are the discouragements which people must encounter in the way of duty, what from their small progress in it, the averseness of their own spirit from it, Rom. vii. 18, the great opposition from outward and inward temptations to it, 1 John ii. 16, that they often need as much of consolation and encouragement, as exhortation and admonition, for making them advance in it; for he bids them, in order to this, "Comfort themselves together."

4. There is none so far advanced, or so diligent in the exercise of any grace, but they need the spur of exhortation, at least to make them persevere, seeing the best are ready to faint, Jonah ii. 7; Gal. vi. 9; if not also to make them do better, seeing the best come far short of what they ought, Phil. iii. 13. For he exhorts them to the present duty, though he doth commend their present diligence in it: "Edify one another," saith he, "as also ye do."

5. A prudent minister should so excite the Lord's people unto their duties, as not to neglect their good beginning or progress already made, but let them know he taketh notice of them as such, which may prove a forcible encouragement to some to quicken their pace, and a sovereign remedy against discouragement in others, than which nothing doth prove a greater enemy to diligence in duty; for so doth Paul here: "Edify one another, even as also ye do," saith he.

VER. 12. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

Let by binding the duty of mutual edification upon all Christians, ver. 11, he had seemed to make a public ministry useless, therefore he doth lovingly and affectionately (as the compellation "brethren," and the word rendered "beseech" imply) press a fourth branch of sanctification, containing a short sum of people's duty towards their ministers and church guides: who are here described to be, first, "those who laboured" among them even to weariness, (as the word signifieth,) which seemeth to relate chiefly unto ministers or preaching presbyters, the speciality of whose office is to labour in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v. 17. Next, they were "over them," the word signifies to excel and bear rule, 1 Tim. iii. 4—12, and thus it expresseth that part of their office, whether they be preaching or ruling presbyters, which consists in ruling and governing the flock, 1 Tim. v. 17; only he addeth, "in the Lord," to distinguish church government from the civil. It is spiritual, in things relating immediately to God, and to be exercised not in their own name, but in the name and authority of the Lord Christ, Matt. xviii. 20. They are over the flock, not as lords, 1 Pet. v. 3, but as stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. Thirdly, they did "admonish them," whereby he expresseth one main thing wherein they were to labour, and to exercise their authority and rule, to wit, their endeavouring by all competent means, and particularly both by doctrine and more gentle censures, to put a right impression of duty upon the minds of the

Lord's people. The word in the original signifieth to put a right mind in one. Next, he presseth the duties of people towards their ministers, which are first "to acknowledge them," as the word may be rendered here; for the naked knowledge of their persons and gifts may be in such as otherways condemn them; but the knowledge of them here required is an acknowledging them for such as they are by reason of their calling, and ought to be accounted. See 1 Cor. xvi. 18.

DOCTRINES.

1. So great an enemy is Satan to the ordinance of a public ministry, 1 Thess. ii. 18; so necessary is it that people do countenance that ordinance, and encourage those who are intrusted with it, even for their own good, Heb. xiii. 17; so ignorant, unmindful, and neglective are they of those duties which they ought to perform for that end, 2 Cor. xii. 11, that the servants of Christ should, with much seriousness and affectionate insinuation, press upon the Lord's people all such duties of respect, reverence, love, obedience, submission, Heb. xiii. 17, and gratitude, Gal. vi. 6, as they owe unto their ministers and those who are over them in the Lord; so far should they be from a total neglect of pressing any such duties, under a pretence of self-denial, or from preposterous modesty; for Paul doth here most seriously and affectionately press duties of that kind: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know," &c.

2. The duties of private edification should be so gone about and entertained by private Christians, as the office of a public ministry be not hereby rendered useless and despicable, or the proper duties thereof encroached upon, by those who are not called to that function, Heb. v. 4; for therefore he subjoins this precept, which presseth upon people respect to the public ministry, to that other about mutual edification, immediately preceding: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know," &c.

3. The duties which people discharge to their ministers should flow from their knowledge and inward conviction, that the place and station wherein their ministers are set doth call for such duties at their hands, and not from mere custom, force of civil laws, regard to their own credit, or for gaining of their ministers' favour, or any thing of that kind; otherwise, neither will their duty be pleasantly done, nor acceptable to God when it is done; for therefore doth he enjoin it as the first piece of people's duty to their ministers, and the foundation of all the rest, to know and acknowledge them for such to whom they ought in conscience discharge those duties: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you."

4. One great and main cause of people's backwardness to do duty unto their ministers, and of disrespect both to their persons and function, is, their ignorance and not serious perpending the weight and wearisome toil of their labour, the dignity of their office, together with the usefulness and necessity of their work among them; for therefore doth Paul describe the ministry from the dignity of their office, the toilsomeness of their labour, and the usefulness of their work to the people, as so many motives unto people to

discharge that duty which they owe them: "Which labour among you, and are over you and admonish you:" and ver. 13, "for their work's sake."

5. The wisdom of God hath so contrived Scripture, that frequently in one word and sentence it doth comprise a variety of distinct purposes; for here, with one breath, he teacheth both people their duty, and ministers their duty, and maketh the latter an argument to enforce the former: "Know them," saith he, "which labour among you, and are over you," &c.

6. The Lord Christ hath appointed the ordinance of church government in his house, distinct from, and in things proper to it, independent upon the civil magistrate, to be managed by church guides, ministers, and elders, in their ecclesiastic courts and judicatories, 1 Cor. v. 4; for the word rendered "over you," doth properly and usually signify a power of jurisdiction and government, and the expression "in the Lord," doth distinguish this government from the civil; "And are over you in the Lord," saith he.

7. The power of church government, and the exercise of it, is not by any appointment of Christ's, restricted to any one minister or person whomsoever, having power of authority and jurisdiction above the rest, neither doth it belong to the body and community of church members, but to all the ministers and church guides in common; for he speaketh here of them all, and only of them: "They are over you in the Lord."

8. The Lord's ministers ought so to go about one part of their ministerial function as not to neglect another: they must so preach, as not to neglect the exercise of discipline, and so exercise discipline as not to neglect to labour in the word and doctrine; for, saith he, "They labour among you, and are over you in the Lord."

9. So necessary and useful is the exercise of discipline by church guides to the church of Christ, for keeping the ordinances pure, Rev. ii. 2, and the Lord's people free from the infection of contagious sins, 1 Cor. v. 5, 6, for reclaiming and gaining of scandalous offenders to repentance, 1 Tim. i. 20, and for ordering all the affairs of Christ's house, 1 Cor. xiv. 48, (none of which ends can be attained so well and effectually as by the mean appointed thereto by Christ himself,) that the Lord's people should be so far from reluctancy to lay their necks under this piece of Christ's easy yoke, that they ought to acknowledge, respect, love, and discharge all other duties unto their ministers and church guides upon this very account of their exercising discipline, as well as of their labouring in the word and doctrine; for to incite people to their duty to ministers, he describes them not only from this, that "they laboured among them," but also "were over them in the Lord."

10. Whatever other thing is requisite in a minister, yet this one thing is necessary, and may not be wanting, some measure of skill and dexterity to admonish the Lord's people of their duty, by clearing up to their minds the equity of it, and producing some pertinent motives for bringing them to a good liking with it; for his expressing only this one particular piece of their work doth imply that it is a chief one, and that

some competency of abilities for it must not be wanting: "And admonish you," saith he.

VER. 13. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And be at peace among yourselves.*

The apostle in this verse doth, first, press a second head of duty flowing from the former, which people owe to their ministers, to wit, that they should "esteem them very highly," or superabundantly, (as the word doth signify,) whereby he points at the inward reverence and respect to their persons and office due to them, to be testified in their speech. Matt. xii. 34, and other behaviour, Phil. ii. 29, which he shows should be accompanied with love to them, a love, without doubt, which ought to kyth [appear] in its effects, Gal. iv. 15. Secondly, he gives a reason or motive unto all the forementioned duties, to wit, "for the work" of the pastoral function, that ministers might be encouraged in it, Heb. xiii. 17, and because it is an excellent work in itself, 1 Tim. iii. 1, and most necessary and advantageous to the Lord's people, 1 Tim. iv. 16. Thirdly, he presseth another branch of sanctification relating unto all, to wit, the study of keeping Christian peace and concord "among themselves," and especially with their ministers, lest by any means Satan might stir up strife and prejudice among them, to make the labours of their ministers unprofitable.

DOCTRINES.

1. The great thing which ministers should press, in relation to themselves, upon people, and which people should endeavour toward their ministers, is to have their hearts possessed with an affectionate and good esteem of their persons and office, as that which will bring with it the hearty and willing performance of all other duties which they owe unto them; for he thinks it sufficient to press this esteem flowing from love, as knowing that, this being attained, all the rest would follow: "And to esteem them very highly in love."

2. This high esteem which is due from people unto their minister, as it must flow from love to his person for his work's sake; so it must manifest itself in kindness and beneficence, in a seemly behaviour toward him, in hoping the best of him, in bearing with his human frailties, in not publishing of them, in not receiving misreports or taking up groundless jealousies against him, and in such other fruits of love and charity as are mentioned, 1 Cor. xiii. 4-7; for, he saith, "Esteem them very highly in love."

3. As it is not sufficient we do what is right and commanded, except it flow from right and allowed motives; so whatever a minister be otherwise for birth, for personage, for riches, for other natural endowments, it ought to be a sufficient motive and inducement to gain him esteem and respect, that the Lord hath employed him in such a worthy excellent work as the proclaiming of peace to rebels in Christ's stead, 2 Cor. v. 20, the espousing of a bride to him, 2 Cor. xi. 2, and the gaining of souls to God, 1 Cor. ix. 22, and

whatever esteem is given him from any other motive, whether the dignity of his place, eminency of his parts, the affableness of his disposition, or his easiness to receive satisfaction in the matter of his maintenance, if it be not also and mainly upon the account of his work, that esteem is not given which is due to a minister of the gospel; for he will have them to "esteem them for their work's sake."

4. As Christian peace and concord among societies is a nursing mother unto all other duties, 1 Tim. ii. 2, so it tendeth, in a special manner, to make the work of the ministry successful among a people, while ministers have thereby not only access but delight to be doing good among the people, and people also to edify one another; and nothing marreth the good of a ministry more than a spirit of discord, dissension, and strife, let loose either betwixt pastor and people, or betwixt people and people among themselves; for therefore, it seemeth, immediately after he hath spoken of the duties both of pastor and people, he subjoineth, "And be at peace among yourselves."

VER. 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

He doth here press four duties, which are so many further branches of sanctification, and all of them belong both to people and ministers, to each in their own way. (See in Doct. 1.) The first three are stricte to three sorts of persons for their object, as, first, the "unruly," that is, who as disorderly soldiers (from which the word in the original is borrowed) do transgress the order, bounds, and limits of their particular calling and station assigned them by God, and especially such as neglect their own business, and intrude themselves upon the affairs of others, as the apostle explains himself, 2 Thess. iii. 11, and those are to be "admonished," that is, minded of their duty, yea, and sharply rebuked for the neglect of it, for that the admonition here required doth include so much, is clear from 2 Thess. ii. 10, &c. A second sort are the "feeble-minded," that is, as appears from the remedy prescribed, those who are so much dejected in mind with the sense of sin, or with the feeling or fear of afflictions, that they are ready to faint in the way of their duty, Prov. xxiv. 10, and such are to "be comforted," or animated against their discouragements, from such grounds as the word of truth doth afford. A third sort are the "weak," or infirm, and this either in their judgment through want of capacity or information, Rom. xv. 1, or in practice, who being otherwise tender in their walk are carried aside in some one particular or other by a more than ordinary violence of some temptation, Matt. xxvi. 69. And those are to be "supported." The word signifieth to underprop them, as a beam doth the house, to wit, by bearing, though not with their sins, Gal. ii. 11, yet with their persons, Eph. iv. 2; by tender yielding to them in the practice of things indifferent, 1 Cor. ix. 20; by wise commending

what appearance of good is in them, Matt. xii. 20, and by clearing of their mistakes with calmness and diligence, Acts xviii. 25, 26. The fourth duty is not stricted unto any one sort, but extended "unto all" indifferently who are diseased either in body or mind, and especially such as are troubled with any spiritual malady; to wit, the exercise of "patience;" whereby, it seemeth, according to the present scope, he enjoineth continuance in the forementioned duties, and others of the like nature, without wearying, much less hopeless surceasing, 2 Tim. ii. 25, notwithstanding that success for a time be wanting.

DOCTRINES.

1. The visible church of Christ is constituted not of angels or saints made perfect, but of sinful infirmities, and those of several sorts in several persons; and therefore the church may be well compared to a hospital full of sickly persons, labouring under a great variety of spiritual diseases, some under one sort, some under another, and consequently all of them fit objects upon which Jesus Christ, the great Physician of souls, may exercise some one or other of his spiritual cures; for Paul representeth this church as such, wherein some were "unruly," some "feeble-minded," and a third sort "weak."

2. The Lord's ministers and people may not, on this pretence, rend and separate from the society and fellowship of visible churches, but are to employ their skill and experience in things spiritual, under Christ, the great Physician, every one in his own place and station, in administering some suitable cure and remedy to the diseased members of Christ's visible body, as they may have access and opportunity; for so doth Paul here enjoin them not to separate from, but to "warn the unruly," &c.

3. As there is a great variety of spiritual distempers incident to several diseased patients, and the disease of one is not the disease of all, but almost every patient doth labour under his own distemper, which is, at least in some circumstances, different from the disease of others; so it concerneth those who would prove successful physicians in curing the spiritual distempers of diseased Christians, to be well acquainted with the temper of their patient and the nature of his disease, that they may the better know how to administer a suitable cure; for he shows that there are some more "unruly," some "feeble-minded," some "weak," and implieth that those who were to administer the prescribed cures should know the disease before they meddle with the cure: "Warn the unruly," &c.

4. As Christ, the great Physician, hath provided a great variety of spiritual cures and remedies, answerable to the several distinct infirmities of his diseased people; so every cure is not fitted or to be applied by Christ's servants unto all diseases, otherwise they prove physicians of no value, and by a wrong application do make the malady worse. But every disease must have its own proper cure; for he enjoins them to "warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak."

5. Though every spiritual patient almost, as said is, hath his own distinct distemper, yet

there is one which is common almost unto all, to wit, a great unwillingness to admit of a suitable cure, and no small difficulty to be wrought upon by it; and this doth call for one common remedy unto all, to wit, patience, and indefatigable diligence in Christians who are called to be physicians one to another: "Be patient towards all men," saith he.

VER. 15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

The apostle presseth, in this verse, another branch of sanctification; and because of our propenseness to the sin forbidden, he premits the word "see," or take heed, and beware. The duty enjoined belongeth unto all without exception, to wit, that, first, they would abstain from recompensing "evil for evil," or wrong for wrong, "unto any,"—he meaneth private revenge; for the public execution of justice by the magistrate, in punishing those who do evil, is not here forbidden. (Rom. xiii. 4.) And next, that "they follow," or (as the word implieth, with a sort of eagerness, as the hunter doth the prey,) pursue that which is good, where, by "good," must be meant the exercise of pity and the good of beneficence towards even their enemies, as being here opposed to the act of private revenge, (see Gal. vi. 10,) and this he will have to be pursued "ever," that is, constantly, without any interruption by multiplication or heightening of injuries, and both among "themselves," who were Christians, and to "all men," even to the heathens among whom they lived.

DOCTRINES.

1. The duty of abstaining from private revenge, and of recompensing good to those who wrong us, is a duty from which, of any other, our corrupt nature is most averse, as being most contrary to those woful principles of pride, self-love, impatience, and malice, which are imprinted upon the hearts of all by nature: and therefore a lesson which neither ancient philosophers, yea, nor Scribes or Pharisees, Matt. v. 43, &c. but only Christ himself hath taught: for our natural averseness to this duty is implied in the word "see," take heed, or beware, which is prefixed to it: "See that none render evil for evil."

2. It is a duty which the Lord Christ hath most strictly enjoined, not by way of counsel only, (as the Papists affirm of this and other duties, to wit, that they are so commanded as that they may be omitted without sin, or hazard of punishment,) but by way of most peremptory precept binding all, and that under the hazard of Divine displeasure, Prov. xxiv. 17, 18, for he enjoins it here with a peremptory "see," and will have all obliged to it: "See that none render evil for evil."

3. A Christian man's care to resist sin should be exercised about those sins most, to which he finds himself by nature most inclined, as those to the committing whereof, Satan, who knoweth our natural propension well, will set himself to tempt us most, John xii. 6, with Matt. xiv. 11;

for therefore doth he enjoin them to watch against, and in a special manner resist this sin of private revenge: "See that none render evil for evil."

4. This duty of abstaining from private revenge is incumbent unto all toward all, so that the gallantry, greatness, or power of none doth give him exemption and liberty to usurp upon God's place, by avenging himself for real or apprehended injuries and affronts upon any, even though he were but his equal or underling, the Lord having in this case provided his ordinance of public magistracy for repairing of wrongs, Rom. xiii. 4, and having enjoined unto all the exercise of faith and patience under those injuries whereof they can have no redress by that mean, Ps. xxxvii. 7, for he saith, "see that none render evil for evil unto any."

5. So devilish are some men, that having done the injury themselves, they cannot hear of reconciliation with, or readmission unto the favour of him whom they have injured, though he not only make an offer of it unto them, but also press them and follow on upon them with the offer: and yet even in this case, the patient man must not turn vindictive and impatient, but should lengthen his patience and strengthen his resistance against all temptations and motions to private revenge, so long as the malicious temper of his adversary remaineth, though it were for ever; for he bids them "ever follow" and pursue "that which is good." The word signifieth to pursue a thing that flieth away from us.

6. Though there be some degrees and duties of love which ought to be astricted to some persons more than to others, 1 Tim. v. 8, yet there are others due unto all, even to our enemies, as mainly this act of love specified in the text, the requital of good for evil, there being somewhat in all men, even in the worst of men, to draw forth the exercise of our love and affection in some of its acts and effects towards him; as that he hath some remainder of God's image in him, Rom. i. 20, is of the same flesh, Isa. lviii. 7, and blood with ourselves, Acts xvii. 26, possibly endued with some special gifts of valour, love to his country, 2 Sam. x. 12, which ought to be loved and cherished by us; for he bids "follow good both among yourselves and to all men."

VER. 16. Rejoice evermore.

17. Pray without ceasing.

18. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Three further branches or duties of sanctification are pressed in these three verses. As first that they would "rejoice," that is, labour not only to keep their hearts free from anxiety and discouragement arising from their manifold causes of sorrow and grief, but also with some measure of spiritual delight, to follow upon and be taken up with the sense and sweetness which floweth either from the consideration of the excellency of Christ himself, Cant. v. 10, &c., and of his usefulness unto them, Ps. cxviii. 1, toge-

ther with their interest in him, Cant. ii. 16; or from the observation of his care and providence toward them, 1 Sam. xvii. 32, from the testimony of a good conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12, and from things worldly in so far only as they are pledges of God's favour, and furtherances of a better life, Lev. xxiii. 40. This is the duty of rejoicing here pressed which he willett to be gone about "evermore" under all cases, and at all times: not as if the case of the Lord's people did not sometimes call them to mourning, Eccl. iii. 4, but that even their sorrow and mourning for things grievous should be so much conform to that the Lord calleth for in such cases as it do not mar, but rather further, their rejoicing in the Lord, and in the testimony of a good conscience, 2 Cor. vi. 10. This is contained ver. 16. Secondly, because they did stand in continual need of God's help, either for attaining of good things necessary and wanting, Matt. vi. 11, Phil. iii. 13, or for removing of things evil and present, Job xiv. 1, 1 John i. 8, 10, therefore he excites them to the exercise of "prayer," joined with attention and fervent seriousness of mind, as having vows and undertakings joined with it, for so much doth the word in the original imply; and this "without ceasing," not as if they were to do nothing else, 2 Thess. iii. 10, but they were not to cease upon their not obtaining a present grant, Luke xviii. 1, &c.; they were to be frequent in prayer, Ps. lvii. 17, and always when they had opportunity, to lift up their hearts either in set and solemn prayer or heavenly ejaculations, which latter may be practised without interruption of our other lawful employments, Neh. ii. 4. This is ver. 17. Thirdly, he exhorts them to the duty of "giving thanks," to wit, unto God, Eph. v. 20, which consists in a sensible acknowledgment of favours received from him, 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19, and in expressing our sense of them, either by words, Ps. civ. 1, or works, 1 Cor. x. 31, to his praise: and this he will have discharged "in every thing," that is, in all estates, James i. 9, 10, and for his overruling every thing which befalls us with much mercy and moderation, Ezra ix. 13, and for our good, Rom. viii. 28. All which duties, and especially this of thanksgiving, he urges from the authority of God enjoining them unto all men, Rom. i. 21, but more especially unto Christians and real believers. The reason whereof is hinted at in this, that not only his will enjoining is made known, Ps. cxlvii. 19, but also constant matter and furniture for obeying his will in all those things is conveyed unto them "in" and by "Jesus Christ," Phil. iv. 13, whatever be their case otherwise, Acts v. 41. This is ver. 18.

DOCTRINES.

1. The duty of rejoicing in the Lord (as is set forth in the exposition) and constancy in it, is a sovereign antidote against impatience and a spirit of revenge for injuries received, in so far as it sweeteneth every dispensation, and doth elevate the heart of him who is exercised with it above all things earthly, whether prosperous or adverse; so as he will not willingly, either by immoderate delight in the one, or bitter resentment of the other, be diverted from, or interrupted in, his

sweet and excellent task of rejoicing in the Lord; for Paul insinuates so much while he immediately subjoineth to the former dissuasive from private revenge, this other precept, "rejoice evermore."

2. Though even believers, through their own default, do often droop, Psa. xlii. 11, and of all men living are sometimes most dejected and heartless, Psa. lxxxviii. 3, &c., when either, through untenderness, they have provoked the Lord to hide his face, Psa. xxx. 6, or in their petted discouragement they refuse to be comforted, Psa. lxxvii. 3; yet there are always grounds for rejoicing unto such; though not to their sense, yet to their faith, Psa. lx. 6, though not in themselves, yet in the Lord, Phil. iv. 4, and in what he hath already done, Psa. lxxi. 10, 11, or at least hath promised to do unto them, Phil. i. 6; for this precept to "rejoice evermore," implieth that there will be ever grounds of rejoicing.

3. The joy of God's people which is allowed upon them by the Lord is not light and carnal, casting them loose and idle in the practice of commanded duties, but spiritual and solid, carrying along with it conscientious diligence and circumspectness in duty, Psa. ii. 11, and especially in the duty of prayer, as that without which this rejoicing frame of heart can neither be attained, nor yet entertained and kept, Job xxvii. 10; for, therefore, doth he to the precept of "rejoicing evermore," subjoin immediately this other, "pray without ceasing."

4. Frequency in serious and attentive prayer is of excellent use, as for other ends, Matt. vii. 7, 8, so for this, to keep the heart always in a rejoicing frame and temper, in so far as there is not a more ready way to be eased of our discouraging weights, which keep our spirits at under, that they cannot mount up in this heavenly duty of rejoicing, than to cast the weight and trouble of all that grieves us over upon God by prayer, Phil. iv. 5; for therefore doth he subjoin, "pray without ceasing."

5. Christians should be so ordered by prudence that their intenseness upon and diligence in one duty do not make them neglective or careless of any other: for he will have them so to "rejoice evermore" as they also "pray without ceasing," and so to pray as that, "in every thing they give thanks."

6. That the duties of prayer and thanksgiving do agree well together, see upon Eph. i. 16, Doct. 1. "Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks."

7. As there can be no such ample cause of thanksgiving in this life but there will be still some constant need and reason for prayer, there being always somewhat wanting, even when we enjoy most, 2 Cor. v. 6, so there can be no such urgent and multiplied necessities for exciting to prayer, but upon narrow search there will be found some causes for thanksgiving, if it were but this, that our case is not so evil, but the Lord might justly have made it worse, Ezra ix. 13, and that we are kept from total succumbing or sinking under it, Lam. iii. 21: for while he enjoineth both to "pray without ceasing" and "in every thing to give thanks," it is implied that there will be always reasons for both.

8. One excellent mean for engaging our hearts in the conscientious practice of the forementioned duties of constant rejoicing, assiduous prayer, and continued thanksgiving, is, seriously to consider that our performance of them is not a matter indifferent, or left unto us to do or not do as a piece of our liberty, and as we find our hearts in a temper for them, but most strictly enjoined us by the sovereign will of God the lawgiver; so that our neglect of those doth make us guilty, as the breach of any other of the commands, whether by not sanctifying the sabbath, or by taking his name in vain: for he inferreth the practice of them all from his will enjoining: "For this is the will of God," saith he.

9. Precepts for duty from God the lawgiver are then rightly looked on by us when considered as they are revealed and enjoined to us in Christ, who hath made the insupportable burden of precepts (Gal. iii. 10) an easy yoke unto his followers, Matt. xi. 30, while he pardoneth their failings, Micah vii. 18, renews their strength, maketh them mount up and not be weary, Isa. xl. 31, strengtheneth them to do whatever he enjoineth, Phil. iv. 13, so that his commandments are not grievous, 1 John v. 3; for he proposes God's will unto them, to be considered by them as it was revealed and enjoined to them in Christ: "This is the will of God," saith he, "in Christ Jesus concerning you."

VER. 19. Quench not the Spirit.

20. Despise not prophesings.

He doth here press two other branches of sanctification. The first is set down in a metaphor taken from fire, or gross material light, which is properly said to be extinguished or quenched, and that either by withholding combustible matter, or by casting on the contrary element of water. And the word is here applied to the Spirit of God, who is as fire, giving both the light of knowledge, Eph. i. 17, 18, and heat of love and affection, Luke xxiv. 32; and by the "Spirit" here is not so much to be meant the Spirit of God in his own person and nature, as in his gifts and holy motions or incitements to duty, which are quenched, weakened, lost, or abolished, in ourselves or others, either by our negligence in improving them, Matt. xxv. 29, and by our slight and formal use of means whereby they are entertained, 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4; or by too great diligence in doing evil, Isa. xxix. 13, 14, and especially by contemning or despising his gifts in others, which keeps them at under, 1 Cor. xii. 21, and by resisting his motions and incitements to good in ourselves, Jer. vi. 10. This is the sin here forbidden, and by consequence the contrary duty commanded; to wit, that the gifts and motions of the Spirit of God, whether in ourselves or others, be carefully cherished, 2 Tim. i. 14, and continually stirred up by the use of prayer, hearing, and of all other means thereto appointed, 2 Tim. i. 6. This is ver. 19. The second branch here pressed is subservient to the former; "Despise not prophesy;" where "prophesy" is not taken in a strict sense for prediction or foretelling of things to come, as Acts xxi. 9, (for that was neither so common in the church, nor yet to con-

tinue,) but for the explication and application of the word of God, either by extraordinary or ordinary ministers, even that which we call "preaching," as Rom. xii. 6, 1 Cor. xiv. 3: so the thing commanded is, that they would not "despise," or set at nought, the public preaching of God's word by sent ministers, but rather set a high price upon it; for the word rendered "despise," by an usual flower of speech, doth signify much more than is expressed. This is ver. 20.

DOCTRINES.

1. So insufficient are even the regenerate of themselves to discharge commanded duties in a spiritual manner, 2 Cor. ii. 5, and to persevere in them for any space of time together, Exod. xvii. 12, that there is an absolute necessity of constantly renewed supplies of influence from the Spirit of God for their incitement to duty, Cant. iv. 16; for their through-bearing in duty, John xv. 5; for the renewing of their strength, liveliness, and vigour of spirit, when it is much abated and blunted by their long continuance at duty, Isa. xl. 31: for therefore, as a necessary help for performing the forementioned duties of "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and of giving thanks" in every thing, he enjoineth that they would carefully cherish the gifts, motions, and incitements of God's Spirit: "Quench not the Spirit," saith he.

2. Though the saving gifts of the Spirit of God, and such as accompany salvation, cannot be utterly lost, 1 John iii. 9, yet their actings may for a time be intermitted, Cant. v. 2; yea, themselves, as to some degrees, much abated, Rev. ii. 4, and his common gifts of knowledge, memory, historical faith, legal repentance, and remorse for sin, totally lost, Heb. vi. 4—6, and his suggestions and incitements to holy duties, as they often are repelled by many, Psa. lxxxii. 10, 11, so being frequently repelled, they do utterly cease in some and are wholly extinguished, Eph. iv. 18; for the dissuasion from "quenching the Spirit" implies that the Spirit, in his gifts and motions, may be quenched; to wit, in the forementioned respects, as the scriptures cited do clear.

3. The gifts and motions of the Spirit of God are of such a nature, that if they be not entertained and cherished, they are thereby *ipso facto* quenched, weakened, and, in progress of time, utterly abolished: for therefore he doth not bid them only cherish, but "quench not the Spirit;" implying that they behaved to cherish it, otherwise they could not but quench it.

4. There is not any so far advanced in the way of grace and piety, but they stand in need of being helped and bettered by the public preaching of the Lord's word by his sent ministers; for he enjoineth even those Thessalonians, whom he had formerly so much commended, chap. i. 4, &c., to attend the public preaching of God's word: "Despise not prophesy," saith he.

5. Constant attendance upon the word preached by sent ministers is a singular help to beget and entertain the gifts and motions of the Spirit of God to good in our hearts. And careless neglect, much more contempt, of that ordinance, is the ready way to quench and extinguish any motions

to good, any checks or challenges for evil from the Spirit of the Lord, and consequently doth end in gross profanity at last; for unto that dissuasive from quenching the Spirit he immediately subjoins, "despise not prophesy," or, public preaching.

6. This ordinance of public preaching, as it is most useful and necessary in itself, so it hath been, even in the time of the apostles, and yet is, in hazard to be contemned, what through the insufficiency, Hosea iv. 6, or unministerial conversation, Mal. ii. 8, or the proud and lofty dividing humour of some who preach it, 1 Pet. v. 3, and 3 John 9; and what through the pride and self-conceit of some who should be hearers, as if they stood in no need of it, Heb. x. 25, and blindness of understanding in others, who not considering the wisdom of God in appointing such an ordinance, 1 Cor. i. 21, do see no beauty or worth in it for which they should respect it, 1 Cor. i. 18: for Paul both did see and foresee such a hazard, and therefore enjoineth, "despise not prophesy."

VER. 21. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22. Abstain from all appearance of evil.

In these two verses are the two last particular branches of sanctification here enjoined. By the first he doth guard the former, whereof, ver. 20; for lest he had thereby seemed to have enjoined obedience unto every thing which ministers preach, he doth therefore first command them to "prove" and try accurately by the written word, Acts xvii. 11, as goldsmiths do gold by a touchstone, as the word implieth; and the thing to be tried is "all things," to wit, all those things which are delivered in preaching by them who are sent ministers, and not convict of heresy, for if they be not sent the Lord's people are not to hear them, John x. 5; nor yet if they be known heretics, whose mouths should be stopped, Titus i. 11. Next, to "hold fast" or, as the word signifieth, to hold forcibly, and with both hands, against all who would withhold, "that which is good," or which after trial should be found good doctrine firmly grounded upon the word, and consequently to abstain from that which should be found evil or unsound. This is ver. 21. The second branch here pressed is that they would "abstain from" and eschew, not only that which is really and in itself evil and sinful, but also that which hath any "appearance," show, or representation of evil, that is, whatever, not being otherwise commanded by God, Exod. xii. 35, 36, may give just ground unto unprejudiced beholders, who are not malicious, Gal. ii. 4, 5, even though they be otherwise weak, 1 Cor. x. 28, to suspect the guilt of some real evil in him who practiseth it, such are dangerous phrases of speech in preaching, though not plainly heretical, 1 Tim. vi. 3; sitting at meat in an idol's temple, 1 Cor. x. 21; familiar and unnecessary conversing without a call with profane lewd persons, Luke xxii. 55; or in secret, suspect places with persons of a different sex, chiefly if he or she be evil reported of. This is ver. 22.

DOCTRINES.

1. So foolish and inconsiderate are most men

naturally, that when they are exercised in flying from the one sinful extreme, they are in no small hazard to be carried unawares upon the other. Their great intentness upon the evil which they fly from, and is always before them, doth make them not to ponder or advert unto the snare which is behind them. Paul implieth so much, while having dissuaded from the one extreme of despising public preaching, ver. 20, he presently dissuadeth them from the other, of giving blind obedience to their ministers, while he saith, "prove all things."

2. Though all private Christians have not received an equal measure of gifts, Rom. xiv. 1, yet the Lord hath bestowed a spirit of discerning, in a greater or a lesser measure, upon all, by which, if diligently and tenderly improved in the search of Scripture, Acts xvii. 11, accompanied with prayer, Ps. cxix. 19, they may be enabled so to judge of what they hear delivered in preaching, as to choose and embrace what is sound and nourishing, and refuse and reject whatever is erroneous and hurtful: for if they had not such a spirit of discerning bestowed upon them by God, it should have been in vain to enjoin them to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

3. The spirit of discerning, bestowed by God on private Christians, should be exercised in judging of their ministers' doctrine; not in order to their passing a judicial sentence upon him, for they are not his judges, 1 Cor. xiv. 32; nor yet to the venting of their carping censures against him, making his ministry in all things unsavoury unto others; but in order to the regulating of their own practice, in choosing what is right and refusing what is wrong of what they hear: for he enjoineth the exercise of their judgment of discretion in relation to their own practice, even that they "may hold fast what is good."

4. As a fixed resolution to be constant in the maintenance of any opinion should flow from rational conviction, after exact search, that the opinion which we hold is true and sound, otherwise our constancy and fixedness is but self-willed pertinacy, Jer. xlv. 16; so when, after exact inquiry, truth is found out, we ought to be so fixed and peremptory in our resolution to maintain it, as that we may not waver or be tossed to and fro with any wind of doctrine which is contrary unto it, Eph. iv. 14: for before they resolve, he bids them "prove," and then "hold fast" without wavering, what after trial is found "good."

5. A conscientious tender Christian must not, yea, will not, only have a regard to the all-seeing eye of God, by abstaining from what is evil in itself and in his sight for which his conscience might smite him, but also to the eye of men, by abstaining from what hath the appearance of evil unto them, and for which his good name might be justly smitten and wounded by others: he will study so to walk as that he may not only stand himself, but that occasion of falling by his indiscreet use of Christian liberty be not given unto others. He would labour to be on his guard not only against some temptations, but all, and not only at sometimes, but always: for this is

enjoined in the last place, as the highest step of a tender walk, to "abstain from the appearance of evil," by which a man's name might justly suffer or his neighbour be scandalized, and to abstain not only from some, but "all appearance of evil."

VER. 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the third part of the chapter he concludeth the whole epistle, and first, in this verse, by prayer to God that he would work those graces and duties of sanctification in them which he hath pressed upon them from chap. iv. 3. The particulars in which prayer are, first, the style given to God; he is the "very God of peace," as being the author of all sanctified peace among men, Ps. cxlvii. 14, and chiefly of their peace with God flowing from justification, Rom. v. 1, which epithet, it seemeth, doth here serve as a ground for faith to rely on for obtaining the thing sought, to wit, that he would sanctify them because he was become a God of peace to them, having justified them, Rom. viii. 30. The second particular is the thing prayed for, that he would, first, sanctify them, whereby must be meant the making them to grow in sanctification, described chap. iv. 3, for they were already sanctified in part. And, next, "preserve them blameless," whereby is meant their preservation by the power of God in the state of grace without apostasy or backsliding, which sanctification, the progress and perseverance wherein is here prayed for, is described from its universality in extending itself to the whole man; set down, first, more generally in the word "wholly;" next, in a particular enumeration of the several parts of the whole man, three in number, first, "his spirit," which, when contradistinguished to the soul, as it is here, doth signify the understanding and knowing part of the man. Secondly, "his soul," whereby, being distinguished from the spirit, must be meant his will and affections. Thirdly, "his body," that is, the outward man by which the soul doth act. The third particular in the prayer is a date or term-day condescended upon, to wit, the "coming of the Lord Jesus Christ," which expresseth not only the time how long he desires that God's care in preserving and making them to grow in sanctification should last, but also the term-day when this petition shall be answered to the full, and believers made wholly blameless in holiness, without all spot of ignorance in their understanding, and conformity to God's will, or perverseness in their will and affections, or of any sin whatsoever in their body or outward members; all this shall be "unto," or as the word may read "in the second coming of Christ the Lord to judge the world."

Hence learn, 1. A minister is not to think himself exonerated, when he hath pressed the practice of all necessary duties upon the people of his charge, but he must be tenderly solicitous about the success of his pains among them: and

more particularly, it is a necessary piece of a minister's duty to be frequent and fervent in prayer with God for them, beseeching him earnestly to work that in them which he hath pressed upon them; for the apostle having pressed upon them the several duties of sanctification, from ver. 3 of chap. iv., doth betake himself to God by prayer, that he would "sanctify them wholly."

2. Precepts and exhortations to duty, which are frequent in Scripture, do not infer any power in man's self, or in his free will, to give obedience unto what he is commanded. They only show it is our duty to obey, Mic. vi. 8, and such a duty as do it we must if we would be saved, Luke xiii. 3, and are an outward mean by which the Spirit of God doth effectually work that in his people which he requireth from them, Cant. v. 2 with 4; for if they had sufficient strength in themselves, as of themselves, to obey what he hath pressed upon them, to what end should he pray so fervently here unto the "God of peace to sanctify them?"

3. As the grace of sanctification is not perfected at one instant, but carried on by degrees until it be perfected at death, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, there being still some remainders of the body of death in the best, Rom. vii. 24, for keeping them humble, 2 Cor. xii. 7, for giving them daily errands to the fountain of free grace for pardon, 1 John ii. 1, and renewed strength, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, and for making them long to be dissolved and freed from sin, root and branch, 2 Cor. v. 4; so a mean degree of sanctification, even though it be undoubtedly sincere, should not be rested upon as satisfactory, but daily growth and progress therein endeavoured, without any full satisfaction or quieting of our minds in any degree or measure, until sanctifying grace be fully perfected in glory: for seeing they were already sanctified in part, it must be growth in sanctification for which he prayeth, which implieth that their sanctification was not perfected, and that they themselves should much more endeavour to grow in it, and this until Christ's second coming, if their death should not prevent it. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, unto the coming," &c.

4. As God becometh a God of peace and reconciled unto none but to those whom he sanctifieth, and in whom he worketh a gracious change; so he sanctifieth none but those to whom he becometh a God of peace first; and therefore that our endeavours after holiness may have success, we should have a care to get our peace made with God in the first place: for he joineth these two, peace with God, and sanctification from God, and maketh the latter to follow upon the former: "And the very God of peace sanctify you."

5. As the first beginnings of sanctifying grace, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, so our growth and progress in it is wholly from God. It is true, there are some principles of a new life wrought in us at first conversion, which have their own activity and concurrence for carrying on the work of grace in us afterward, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, but as they are created in us by God at the first, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, so they must be excited to their work, Cant.

iv. 16, upheld and strengthened in their work, Luke xxii. 32, and blessed by God with the success of growth in grace following upon their work above any efficacy that is in themselves, Phil. i. 6, and therefore our growth in grace doth yet remain entirely and wholly God's work, for he ascribeth growth in grace to God as the author, while he prayeth the "very God of peace to sanctify them."

6. So many are those byways of error, 2 Pet. iii. 17, profanity, Heb. xii. 16, formality, &c., 2 Tim. iii. 5, to divert us from the way of holiness after we are engaged in it, so many unexpected difficulties do meet us in the way, Acts xiv. 22, and such is our levity and readiness to repent our undertaking, John vi. 66, our weakness to resist temptations, Matt. xxvi. 70, and easiness to be led aside unto those other byways, Jer. xxv. that there is no less need than of the power of God who did at first engage us, to preserve us carefully, powerfully, and as it were with a strong guard, in the way of holiness; otherwise we cannot long stand upright in it, 1 Pet. i. 5; for he prayeth unto God to "preserve" them in holiness. The word in the original signifieth to preserve accurately, as he who watcheth at the doors of a prison, and is used Acts iv. 3; v. 18; and xxiv. 23.

7. Even the understanding and knowing part of the regenerate is but renewed in part, and standeth in need to be more and more sanctified, by reason of a great deal of ignorance, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, uncertainty, Mark ix. 24, curiosity, John xxi. 21, 22, proneness to mistake the Lord's way of dealing, Isa. xlix. 14, and several other infirmities which are in the understandings even of the best; for therefore doth he pray that God would "sanctify" as well as "preserve" even the renewed Thessalonians in their spirit. "And I pray God your whole spirit," &c.

8. The will and affections also of the regenerate man are but renewed in part, and stand in need to be more and more sanctified; there being a great deal not only of peremptory unwillingness, sometimes, in the will to good, whereby it sometimes refuseth, John iv. 9, and frequently shifteth and delayeth the practice of necessary duty, Hag. i. 2, but also of a hankering inclination unto evil, whereby it sometimes closeth with sin against knowledge, 2 Sam. xi. 4, and sometimes excites the understanding to find out excuses and subterfuges to make sin appear no sin, or but a little one, that it may well, sin with less reluctance, Cant. v. 3. For he prayeth also that their "soul," that is, their will and affections, may be sanctified: "That your whole spirit and soul," &c.

9. As the Lord doth not only require inward sanctity in the understanding, will, and affections, but also outward, in the body and all its members, (see chap. iv. 4, Doct. 1;) so even the truly regenerate have not their very outward man so well reformed, but there is need to have it more and more sanctified. Even the body and its parts, especially the organs of sense and speech, and the instruments of the locomotive faculty, have in them some of that natural stiffness and averseness from being exercised about good and profitable objects, and proneness joined

with agility to be employed in evil, which is spoken of, Rom. iii. 10, &c. For he prayeth that their body also may be more sanctified. "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body," &c.

10. As there is not any the least principal part and particle of the body, and the meanest faculty of the soul, and such as are only subservient to the most principal faculties of it, but they are one way or other defiled with sin, and stand in need of sanctifying grace; so there is not any, no, not the meanest of those in a renewed man's soul or body, to which the Lord doth not extend his special care, not only in changing and sanctifying it at the first, but also in making that begun change to increase and grow, and in preserving the whole man and all his parts, even to the meanest, in that gracious frame and pliability to good unto which he hath brought it; otherwise, if the meanest member of the body or faculty of the soul were left to their own keeping, they could not choose but suddenly miscarry. For he prayeth that "their whole spirit, whole soul, and whole body may be sanctified and preserved by God," and doubtless he prayeth for nothing to them, but what the Lord doth ordinarily to the renewed.

11. As all believers shall attain to their full stature in grace, even to a perfect man, at Christ's second coming, and be freed from all necessity of any further growing in grace after that; so though they will always and to all eternity stand in need to be preserved by God in their glorious state, and accordingly shall be preserved by him, John xvii. 24, yet because they are now, while in their present militant state, obnoxious to more temptations, Eph. vi. 12, and not sufficiently confirmed in good, 1 Cor. x. 12, therefore they stand in more need of preserving grace now than they will then, when there shall be no devil nor wicked world to tempt them, Rev. xx. 10, and xxi. 27, and nothing of a body of death in themselves to comply with temptations, Heb. xii. 23, as there is now: for he makes Christ's second coming the date how long he would have God to continue in sanctifying and preserving them, which is to be understood in the way expressed in the doctrine, "unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," saith he.

VER. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

He concludeth, secondly, with a promise, wherein he assures them that God "will do it," to wit, what he presently prayed for, even sanctify them wholly, and preserve them blameless; and that because "God is faithful," that is, always the same, and like himself, who will certainly perform whatever he hath promised, and therefore he would certainly preserve them, seeing he had promised so much in effect unto them, when he did effectually "call" them, at least to as many of them as he had so "called." For effectual calling is the first breaking out and open declaration of God's secret and eternal purpose to preserve and save those whom he calleth, Rom. viii. 30.

DOCTRINES.

1. Our prayers put up to God, whether in behalf of ourselves or others, should be grounded upon some explicit or implicit promise, and consequently flow from faith that God will grant what we ask, according to the absolute or conditional tenor of the promise; for Paul's prayers were grounded upon such a promise, and did flow from such confidence, even "that he would do it," as he here expresseth.

2. Most absolute and certain promises may not weaken our diligence in prayer for obtaining the thing promised, but rather incite us to it. Prayer being the mean appointed of God, in the conscientious practice whereof he useth to bestow the good things promised, Ezek. xxxvi. 37; for Paul did pray for their preservation, ver. 23, though he certainly knew, and accordingly doth promise unto them, "that God would do it."

3. As the Lord doth still continue to call those whom he hath once effectually called, by giving them renewed sights of their natural sin and misery, 1 Tim. i. 13, and making them renew their gripes by faith on Jesus Christ, the offered remedy, 1 Tim. i. 15; so effectual calling, and the powerful drawing of a soul from nature to grace, is a speaking pledge of God's purpose to preserve the soul so called in the state of grace, and to make him grow in grace until at last he be without spot and blameless unto the end; for the word "calleth" is in the present time, and noteth a continued action, and is here given as a pledge of God's purpose to sanctify and preserve them; "He that calleth you, who also will do it."

4. No man can know, and much less draw any comfort from, the Lord's eternal purpose in election to save him and perfect the work of grace in him, until he be once effectually called and become a real convert from sin to holiness; yea, he makes effectual calling the first speaking evidence of election, and that which giveth access to look on the decree of election as a ground of expectation that he will perform the thing decreed; and therefore the promise here may be looked upon as conditional, and suspended upon this condition, if so they were called; "He that calleth you will also do it."

5. There is no less than God's fidelity impledged to believers for the most certain performance of all God's gracious promises, so that though they be unworthy to whom he should perform what is promised, yet his impledged faithfulness and truth of his nature is always of that much worth as his respect unto it will put him upon the performance; for Paul sheweth God's faithfulness is laid in pledge, while he saith, "Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it."

VER. 25. Brethren, pray for us.

26. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

He concludeth, thirdly, by recommending some particulars unto their care, as, first, that they would give him and his colleagues the help

of their prayers, ver. 25, and, secondly, that they, to wit, the ministers and church rulers, to whom this and the following direction is given, would "greet" or salute "all the brethren," or members of their church, in his name, in testimony of his hearty affection to them, and take occasion hence to manifest and confirm their affection one to another among themselves, by giving them "a kiss," which in those times and places was commonly used in civil salutations as the usual sign and testimony of affection. And he giveth this kiss the epithet of "holy," to show that it should be sincere and chaste, and neither unchaste nor hypocritical, ver. 26. Besides what is observed upon Eph. vi. 19, Doct. 1, 2, and Col. iv. 3, Doct. 1, 3;

Hence learn, 1. The Lord hath so dispensed his gifts and graces unto his people, that though he giveth not an equal measure unto all, yet to every one somewhat, and to the meanest so much as they may be sometimes and in some respects, useful unto others who are most eminent, that hereby mutual love may be kept among all, while none can say unto another, "I have no need of thee," 1 Cor. xii. 21; for Paul supposeth so much, and therefore calleth upon them all, even the meanest not excepted, to help him by their prayers; "Brethren, pray for us," saith he.

2. It conduceth much to make way for success unto a minister's pains among a people, that they know he loveth them; otherwise, if they doubt of this, they are prone to suspect, if not to cast at all that cometh from him, 2 Cor. vii. 2, 3; for therefore the apostle doth usually close his Epistles by saluting those to whom he writeth, in testimony of his affection to them, that what he writeth may have the more of weight with them; "All the brethren," saith he.

3. A minister should labour so to entertain love betwixt him and the people, as that no expressions of his love, nor insinuations of his for that end do tend, much less be intended, to divide the Lord's people among themselves, of purpose to make both or any of the dissentient parties more devoted and strictly tied unto him, but must endeavour that the same spirit of love which breathed in him may breathe in all the Lord's people toward one another; for he doth so express his affection unto them that he willeth them to express, as it were, the same affection towards one another, while he saith, "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."

4. As it is not sufficient for Christians to carry inward good-will and affection one to another, but necessary, sometimes, that inward love be made evident by some outward expressions and testimonies of the same, so the Lord's people ought not to scruple at, or upon groundless scruples to abstain from, any decent and innocent expression of love and affection, which is ordinarily used in the times and places where they live. Singularity in such things is not religion, neither is scrupulosity about them any point of tenderness; for he bids them express their affection by that which was the usual sign and testimony thereof at those times. "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."

But, 5. Even those external testimonies of love and respect may not be complimentary, or used

only as a piece of a man's good breeding or civility, much less as an engine to ensnare the party towards whom they are used, unto a false belief that he is affected and loved where he is not, Luke xxii. 48; but they ought to be sincere and free from any base and sinful ingredient of that kind. So that even in external duties of common civility, we are bound to exercise some one or other Christian and holy virtue; for therefore doth he require that their affection be made evident by "an holy kiss," or a kiss sanctified and made holy by the grace of sincere affection which is expressed by it, and from which it doth flow. "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."

VER. 27. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

The third recommendation is chiefly pressed upon their ministers and church guides, to whom it seemeth this epistle was sent immediately to be communicated unto the rest. Those he "chargeth by the Lord," or (as the word implieth and signifieth, see 1 Sam. xiv. 24, Matt. xxvi. 63,) he adjureth them, as they would eschew the wrath and vengeance of the Lord Christ, so they would not keep up this epistle unto themselves, but cause it to come to and be plainly "read" in the hearing of "all the brethren," or church members, whom he calleth "holy." (See upon Phil. i. 1, Doct. 5.)

Hence learn, 1. To debar and exclude the Lord's people from acquainting themselves with Scripture, either by reading it themselves or hearing it read by others, is a most grievous sin, obliging the person or persons guilty to undergo the stroke of God's eternal wrath and vengeance; and therefore not only should Scripture be translated into the native language of every nation where Christ hath a church, that people may read it, and hear it, and be acquainted with it; but also the Lord's people themselves ought diligently to improve what helps of that kind are afforded for bringing them to intimate acquaintance with the mind of God revealed in Scripture, and look upon their so doing as a duty of greatest importance and weight. For Paul doth "charge" or adjure them with denunciation of God's heavy vengeance, in case they should not cause read this epistle to all the holy brethren; adjurations of which sort are not to be used but when duties of weight are charged. Now what Paul doth charge here about this epistle, was doubtless his mind in relation to other scriptures, seeing there is nothing peculiar to this epistle, for which the Lord's people should be made acquainted with it, that may not be said of other scriptures also; besides, that the apostle doth elsewhere express himself much to the same purpose of some others of his epistles, Col. iv. 16, and of all Scripture indefinitely, Col. iii. 16.

2. It concerneth ministers and church guides especially, to see to it carefully that the Lord's people of their charge be acquainted with Scripture, and in order to this end, to incite them to read it in secret, Col. iii. 16, to have it read in their families, Deut. vi. 9, as also to labour upon those who have power, and whom it concerneth,

that children and young ones of both sexes be trained up at schools, at least so far as they may be able to read the Lord's word distinctly in their own native language; for this charge is given to the church guides. "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren," saith he.

3. That Scripture be publicly read to the Lord's people assembled together for his worship, even though it be not presently expounded and applied by the minister, is so far from being a part of will worship, that it should seem from this place to have some stamp of divine authority put upon it, as upon an ordinance useful in its own place, as for several other ends, so especially for acquainting the Lord's people with the language of the Holy Ghost speaking in Scripture, and with the history of the Bible, a great part whereof otherwise some may possibly never so much as once hear with their ears, though they live to many years; for he chargeth them not only to incite the Lord's people to read this epistle themselves and apart, but that it "be read unto all the holy brethren," to wit, (as it seemeth,) being assembled together.

VER. 28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

He concludeth the epistle, lastly, by his usual and confident farewell wish for "our Lord Jesus Christ, his grace," or favour, as the fountain, and all good things as streams flowing from it, to be conveyed to them and continued with them. Besides what is already observed upon the like farewell wish in the close of the four former epistles,

Hence learn, So inexhaustible is the fountain of God's free grace and favour, and so copious are the streams of all spiritual blessings flowing from it, that no such measure either of the one or the other can be attained by any, but more may be had; more is allowed, and more and more is daily to be sought and thirsted after: for though real believers among them had received already a great measure of God's grace and

favour, in its sense and in its effects, yet he wishes unto them not only the continuance of what they had, but some further degree to be added as more of it, while he saith, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

POSTSCRIPT.

The First *Epistle* unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

Seeing this Epistle is written in the name also of Timotheus and Silvanus, as appeareth from chap. i. ver. 1, therefore it is most probable that it was not written from Athens, as the postscript affirms, but rather from Corinth, because they two did not return, the one from Thessalonica, the other from Berea, unto Paul, before he went from Athens unto Corinth, as appears from Acts xviii. 5, and 1 Thess. iii. 1, where Paul affirms that when he had dismissed Timotheus, he was left alone at Athens, and therefore had not these his two colleagues with him there, and consequently could not write this epistle in their names from thence. Besides, as the learned observe, in several ancient copies there is no mention made of the place from whence it was written.

Hence learn, That the postscript of Paul's epistles, or those words which are set after the close of his epistles, designing always whence they were written, and sometimes the person or persons by whom they were sent, are no part of Canonical Scripture, not always firm, nor written by the apostle himself, but added afterwards by some men, either unlearned or certainly inconsiderate, according to their own opinion. And therefore, though the postscripts affixed to the former four epistles had nothing, for what can be known, dissonant from truth as this hath, yet I did not dare to draw any observations from them, as if they had been of equal authority with the Epistles themselves.

THE
SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

EXPOSITION

OF

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

THE ARGUMENT.



PAUL having not long before this written the preceding epistle to the church at Thessalonica, wherein he had shown his resolute purpose to come and see them, 1 Thess. iii. 10, 11, and being yet as formerly, 1 Thess. ii. 18, hindered, he hath been informed that not only their sad sufferings did yet continue, chap. i. 4, but also that some, having taken occasion from what he wrote, 1 Thess. iv. and v., concerning Christ's second coming unexpectedly to judgment, did spread a fond and fabulous opinion as if Christ had been to come in that present age, chap. ii. 2, whereupon some among them did cast by all care of their particular callings, and others, abusing the simplicity of those, and having given themselves unto idleness, did live upon their means, chap. iii. 11; therefore, and upon those occasions, he writeth this second epistle unto them; his scope wherein is, to confirm them in the doctrine of faith and practice of piety against both persecutors and seducers, which after the inscription, chap. i. 1, he endeavoureth to effectuate, first, by comforting them under their present sad sufferings, ch. i. Secondly, by refuting the forementioned error, from this, that there would be first a general apostasy under the antichrist, before Christ's second coming, chap. ii. Thirdly, by exhorting them to several duties of a Christian conversation, and more especially to abandon in their own practice, and suppress in others, the sin of idleness, to ver. 16, of chap. iii. In which, and the two following verses, he concludeth the epistle.

CHAPTER I.

THE first part of this chapter containeth the inscription of the epistle, ver. 1, 2. In the second

part he propoundeth four grounds of consolation to them under their present sufferings; the first of which, is, his high estimation of them made manifest, by his giving thanks to God for them, ver. 3, and his holy boasting of them, and of the graces of God in them unto other churches, ver. 4. A second ground of consolation is taken from this, that their present sufferings did serve as a glass wherein they might foresee the day of judgment coming, and an happy event of that day as to them, ver. 5, which he proveth from God's righteous nature, ver. 6, 7. A third doth lie in a description of that last day, first, from the glorious manner of Christ's coming on it, ver. 7, 8. Secondly, from a twofold end of his coming, 1. To destroy eternally wicked reprobates, ver. 8, 9; 2. To glorify the godly elect, ver. 10. The fourth ground of consolation is taken from his prayers to God for them, that the Lord would make them meet for heaven, by fulfilling all things necessary to salvation in them, ver. 11. The result whereof should be glory both to Christ and them, ver. 12.

VER. 1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:
2. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

These verses contain the inscription of the epistle, in the same words which are already handled, 1 Thess. i. 1. It declareth, first, who did write this epistle; secondly, to whom it was written, ver. 1; and thirdly, the usual salutation, ver. 2. Besides what is formerly observed upon the place presently cited,

Hence learn, 1. As the Lord in deep wisdom and rich mercy hath appointed several means of edification for his church, so his sent servants are bound to endeavour their edification by one mean, when they are not in a capacity to edify them by another; for Paul being out of a capacity for the time, to edify this church by public preaching, doth endeavour to edify them by his writings. "Paul, unto the church of the Thessalonians."

2. The written word of God is so contrived that it did not only serve to edify those unto whom it was first directed, but also doth hold forth copious matter of edification unto all others to whose knowledge it shall come, and should be improved by them accordingly: for this and the rest of Paul's epistles, which were at first directed to such and such particular churches and persons, do stand in Scripture as a rule and canon of faith and manners unto all Christian churches and persons to the world's end. "Paul, unto the church of the Thessalonians."

3. The Spirit of God which speaketh in Scripture, doth not so much regard either variety or elegance of words and style, as the purpose expressed by those words; and ministers who would rather edify the Lord's people, than beget a good opinion of their own abilities among their hearers, should study to be acted by the same spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 4; for Paul useth the very same form of plain words in the inscription of this epistle, which he used in the former. "Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus," &c.

4. Though the Lord hath bound himself by absolute promise, to grant unto us whatever we ask in the name of Christ, John xvi. 23, and according to his will, 1 John v. 14, yet the most fervent prayers of gracious saints, accompanied with all conditions required in prayer, are not always attended with an answer in the same very thing which is sought; and therefore the forementioned promises must be understood with this alternative, God will grant us, either what we pray for, or what he in wisdom seeth more expedient for us, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; for Paul prayed fervently that he might see their face, 1 Thess. iii. 10, which desire hath not been granted, as appeareth by his writing to them of new to supply the continued want of his presence. "Paul, to the church of the Thessalonians."

5. The Lord's people, and especially his public instruments, when marred and crossed in prosecuting some one or other expedient, projected by them as tending much to advance the Lord's work, ought not to fret or sit down discouraged, but to consider wisely what other expedient the Lord in providence doth carve out to be followed by them instead of that, and without anxiety are to apply themselves unto it: for Paul being hindered from coming to them, without more ado doth reverence the Lord in his disappointment, and betaketh himself to writing. "Paul, unto the church of the Thessalonians."

VER. 3. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

The apostle's scope in this second part of the chapter being to comfort those persecuted Thessalonians under their present sad sufferings, and thereby to confirm them the more in those truths for which they did suffer, he propoundeth several grounds of consolation unto them. The first whereof is, the high esteem which he and his associates had of their graces, which was testified

in two things: first, his esteem of them, and of God's graces in them, was such that he did judge himself "bound," because of the "meetness," congruity and equity of the duty in several respects, to make conscience "of giving thanks to God for them," and that always, in so far as there was always a supply of new matter for this duty, furnished unto him from them, which he condescends upon in two particulars, first, their "faith did grow exceedingly," or overgrow, and grow over-bounds, to wit, not the bounds prescribed by God, but beyond what it was before, yea, and, it may be, the expectation which men had of them. (See how faith doth grow, upon Col. ii. 7, Doct. 5.) Next, their charity, or love towards each other, did "abound" and also grow, and this in every one of them all without exception, to wit, so far as he in charity could judge, being now at a distance, and informed of their estate only by the favourable reports of others, or of some among themselves. (See how charity doth increase and grow, 1 Thess. iv. 10, Doct. 6.)

Learn further hence, 1. As the Lord giveth sometimes way unto the rage and fury of men and devils to trouble and persecute his dearest saints for righteousness' sake; so it usually falleth out that the more they rage, the less they gain their intent; the more they stain the church's outward beauty, the more doth her inward beauty, the sanctifying graces of God's Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ, increase and grow: for so was it with this persecuted and afflicted church, as the general scope of this part of the chapter, which is to comfort them under their sufferings, doth imply, and the following verse doth express; and yet Paul affirmeth here, "their faith did grow exceedingly, and their charity abound."

2. However the Lord doth usually make his people's graces to thrive best under a suffering lot, as said is, yet even then they do not want their own discouragements and faintings, arising, partly, from the fear and feeling of their own weakness, Job vi. 12, and partly, from the remainders of unmortified corruption within them, which make them incline to be weary of lying so long under such a sad and humbling exercise; and therefore, how thriving soever their case be otherwise, they stand in no small need of consolation and encouragement: for Paul supposeth so much while he sets himself to comfort this persecuted and thriving church, "we are bound to thank God always."

3. It is a singular comfort and encouragement to a gracious soul, under his saddest cross, to know that the work of grace in him is not only in a vigorous case, but also taken notice of by others and improved as an occasion of thanksgiving unto God from many, 2 Cor. i. 11; and it is the duty of Christians, in order to that end, so to take notice of, and improve the growing graces of honest sufferers: for Paul, in order to the comfort and encouragement of this church, makes them know he took notice of their growth in grace, and did improve it as a ground of thanksgiving: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren."

4. A gracious humble heart doth for the most part so little please himself with his way of dis-

charging duty to God, and especially this sublime and heavenly duty of thanksgiving and praise, that he dare hardly say he doth discharge it as he ought, but only acknowledge his obligation to discharge it, with the equity and conveniency of it: and so much ought to be acknowledged and avowed, when little further can be attained; for Paul doth not here say he did give thanks, though doubtless he did so, but only "we are bound to thank God always for you, as it is meet."

5. We ought so to comfort and encourage afflicted Christians, by making them know how much we esteem what good is in them, as that we do not thereby puff them up, and make them conceit of what they have as if they had not received it from God; for Paul doth thus guard the present consolation, while he giveth God the praise of any good was in them and not themselves. "We are bound to thank God always for you," saith he.

6. As God deserveth the thanks and praise of his people's graces, and not themselves; and as the gracious receipts of others do lay on a tie of thanksgiving to God upon us, so we are not always to conceal our conscience-making of this duty from the knowledge of others, but ought to make it sometimes known, though not to gain applause to ourselves, Matt. vi. 5; yet, as for other ends, so thereby to encourage those whom it concerns, when their case doth otherwise call for it: for that Paul may encourage this afflicted and persecuted church, he doth make them know that he "did always give thanks to God for them, because their faith grew exceedingly."

7. Where there is a growth of saving grace in any, there is not wanting sufficient ground of thanksgiving to God for them, nor yet of comfort and encouragement unto themselves, this alone being a sufficient evidence that all things work together for good unto them, according to the promise, Rom. viii. 28; for though this church was otherwise sore pressed with persecution, yet Paul looks upon their growth in grace as matter of thanksgiving to God, and of comfort to themselves; "Because that your faith groweth exceedingly," saith he.

8. Then are Christians praiseworthy in themselves, and for matter of praise to the Lord and of joy to his faithful servants who labour among them, when, according to their time and standing, and the precious means under which they live, their graces are upon the growing hand: for since Paul hath written the former Epistle unto this church they had grown exceedingly, and gone far beyond what themselves then were, as appears from 1 Thess. i. 3, where he only mentioneth their graces simply, without any commendation to them for their growth, but now he shows their faith had grown exceedingly. And therefore is it that he gives thanks to God for them here, and glorieth of them before the churches, ver. 4, even because, saith he, "your faith groweth exceedingly, and your charity aboundeth."

9. As the saving graces of faith and love admit of degrees, and do not come to their height and perfection at the first, so they increase and decrease, grow and fade together, in so far as faith, being the cause of love, Gal. v. 6, and love an

evidence of faith, 1 John iii. 14, the vigour and decay of the one cannot choose but have some answerable influence upon the other: for Paul sheweth they both did grow proportionably and together: "Your faith," saith he, "groweth exceedingly, and your charity aboundeth."

10. It is a sweet ingredient for comfort and encouragement to an afflicted suffering church, when Satan prevaileth not to make a wedge of their afflicted case, or of any other thing, to rend them asunder neither in opinion, affection nor practice: but the more they are heated and persecuted by men, the more do they cleave in love and affection flowing from faith one to another: and it must of necessity prove a most uncomfortable addition to all their sufferings when it is otherwise; for Paul doth mention their abounding in love towards each other, flowing from faith, as that which might and doubtless did sweeten all their sufferings, and yield them matter of comfort under them, "because," saith he, "your faith and charity towards each other aboundeth."

11. Our judgment of the inward gracious estate of others ought to be swayed and ruled with charity, which though it be not blind in passing judgment contrary to seen and pregnant evidences, Tit. iii. 16, yet it is not too suspicious, where there is not clear ground, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, and hopeth the best in things which are uncertain, 1 Cor. xiii. 7; for so did Paul, being now at a distance from them, and being informed of their estate by the favourable reports of those who came from them, he doth without any further anxious inquiry judge of them all and every one of them, without exception of any, as truly gracious and abounding in charity towards all, which he could not have done, except he had in charity construed some known escapes among them to the better. "The charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth," saith he.

VER. 4. So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

Here is the second thing, whereby his high esteem of them was testified, which followed upon their forementioned abundant growth. It weighed so with him that he himself, a man of a sober discerning spirit, far from flattery, was constrained to glory of them, that is, to speak with a kind of holy boasting (as the word taken in a good sense doth signify) to the recommendation of the grace of God wrought in them by God's blessing upon his ministry, and to propound them to those other "churches of God" among whom he gloried of them, for a pattern to be imitated by them. So that his gloriation and boasting was not in the flesh, or in men, which is forbidden, Phil. iii. 3; 1 Cor. iii. 21, but in the Lord; for it was not for things carnal but spiritual, to wit, their faith and patience, the praise whereof he hath first ascribed unto God, ver. 3, and though some commendation did hereby accresce unto himself, as to the Lord's instrument

for good to them, 1 Cor. ix. 1, yet his great design herein is not to hunt after applause unto himself, Gal. i. 10, but to commend the Lord who had wrought by him, 1 Cor. xv. 10, and to excite others to the imitation of those praiseworthy graces which were eminent in this church, 2 Cor. viii. ver. 1—3, with 8. Now the matter of his boasting was, as he himself doth next express, first, their “patience” or praiseworthy perseverance under the yoke of duty with the endurance of the cross, for the word in the original implieth both perseverance and endurance; next, their “faith,” or the exercise of that grace in all its branches under the greatest difficulties. Both which graces are commended from the great opposition by which they were assaulted in their exercise, what from multiplied “persecutions,” that is, afflictions from men for righteousness’ sake, Matt. v. 10, and what from multiplied “tribulations,” that is, any affliction whatsoever, whether immediately or mediately from God; all which they did with patience and confidence “endure.” The word signifieth willingly to endure and suffer, Matt. xvii. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 12.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though Christians should not be proud of any applause or esteem they have, nor seek to have their graces made known for gaining esteem to themselves, except it be in subserviency to the praise of God; (see upon Gal. vi. ver. 4, Doct. 5); yet they ought to look upon it as an encouraging mercy, when their name is savoury for good, and their graces made known among the Lord’s people, in so far as they themselves are thereby engaged to walk answerably to their name, 2 Cor. ix. 2, with 4, and are in better capacity to do good in their station unto those with whom their name is precious, 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19, and God doth thereby get the more of praise for his goodness to them from many, 2 Cor. i. 11, and others also are incited to glorify God by their example, Matt. v. 16; for in order to their encouragement and comfort, he shows that their graces were made known by him to other churches, and they esteemed of for them accordingly, while he saith, “so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God.”

2. Though we ought to endeavour, so far as is possible, to have our names savoury for good unto all, 1 Pet. ii. 12, yet those among men, unto whom we should study to approve ourselves most, and to carry a deserved commendation from, are the sober and judicious godly, who hate dissimulation and flattery. And whatever be our esteem with, or commendation from fawning flatterers, or the weak, unsolid, (though otherwise pious) discerners, it can afford but small encouragement and comfort, if those others have had thoughts of us, or stand by as neutrals: for the encouragement propounded to them doth stand in this that Paul and his associates, who were more eminently gracious, did think so well of them. “So that we ourselves glory in you,” saith he.

3. A minister’s boasting and gloriation as to his flock and charge should not be in their multitude, riches, greatness, or civilities towards himself, nor yet simply in their high esteem of

him for his abilities and graces, but in the success of his pains among them, and in the saving graces of God’s Spirit bestowed upon them by means of his ministry; neither is it unlawful, but sometimes convenient, for a minister so to glory in his flock, providing his gloriation be qualified as Paul’s was; (see the exposition); for Paul saith, “we ourselves glory in you, for your faith and patience.”

4. As it is the duty of the Lord’s people to speak to the commendation of God’s grace in others, so they should be ruled by prudence in the discharge of this duty, and not too lavish in their commendations, either by commending men too much above their known worth, or by boasting of them, although their worth deserve it, indifferently unto all, even to those who know not the worth of grace, and to whom the boaster, partly boasted of, and the graces of God’s Spirit for which he boasteth, are alike unsavoury. There should be a distinct and prudent choice both of the party in whom, and of the party to whom we boast: for Paul’s boasting is of men eminently gracious, as the preceding verse doth show, and not indifferently before all, but only in the churches of God. “So that,” saith he, “we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God.”

5. That persecutions, crosses, and tribulations, especially from wicked men, are the ordinary lot of God’s church and people, and the reasons why it is so, see upon Gal. i. ver. 13, Doct. 6. “In all your persecutions and tribulations which ye endure,” saith he.

6. The greatest glory of Christians, and the richest matter of gloriation in them, and of thankfulness to God which can be afforded unto others from them, is not so much in their resisting by force, and breaking the yoke and power of their persecuting enemies, as in their meek and patient endurance of the utmost of their rage and fury, before they cede one have [concede any thing] in the point of truth and duty; for Paul did glory in them for their “patience in all their tribulations.”

7. As the grace of patience under sufferings presupposeth faith, and cannot be where faith is not, whatever seeming patience a natural man, destitute of faith in Jesus Christ, may have, it is not a saving grace, but either brutish stupidity, Gen. xlix. 15, or heartless despair, Gen. iv. 13, 14, or, at the best, a moral virtue only, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, defective as to the intensive measure of patience, contrary to Col. i. 11, or as to the extent of patience to all crosses, contrary to Col. i. 11, and as to the spiritual grounds and motives from which it should flow, contrary to Rom. v. 3, compared with 1; so the more a man doth grow in faith the more he will be assisted and furnished with the grace of patience under cross dispensations; and as faith is weakened, so our patience also will decay and languish. For, he joineth their “patience with faith in all their tribulations.”

8. As grace is then most praiseworthy, when, the more it is opposed, the more it groweth; so it argueth an eminent degree of faith and patience, and such as may indeed be boasted of, and propounded as a pattern for imitation unto others, when variety of trials and cross dispensations

from God, and of persecutions from men, do not mar, but rather quicken the exercise of those graces: for their "patience" and "faith," of which he gloried, were such as did sustain them and make them "endure all their persecutions and tribulations."

VER. 5. *Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

Followeth a second ground of consolation under their present sad sufferings, taken from what their afflictions from wicked men and their patience under them, spoken of, ver. 4, did signify. They were "a manifest token," or an infallible argument and demonstration proving convincingly that God shall judge the world righteously at the last day; for by this "righteous judgment" must be meant the last and general judgment, as the following verses make evident. And, first, it is called "righteous," because though God doth always judge righteously when he judgeth, *Psa. li. 4*, yet then shall his righteousness in judging be most evident, and all those things which do now obscure it, *Jer. xii. 1*, fully removed, *Matt. xxv. 32*, &c. Next, their patient suffering is said to be a convincing evidence that this righteous judgment shall come to pass, because supposing that undeniable principle which is clear to the very light of nature, *Rom. i. 20*, that God is an all-seeing, omnipotent, and righteous Judge, it must of necessity follow that he seeth what injuries are done unto his people, hath power to punish them, and seeing he doth not punish them now, he will be avenged on them hereafter. Which ground of consolation is further enlarged from the end, or event, of that last judgment unto them; they should be therein "accounted," or judicially accepted and declared, "worthy," or (as the word is rendered, *Acts xxvi. 20*;) "fit" and meet to enjoy "the kingdom of God," that is, heaven and glory, called a "kingdom," for reasons hinted upon *Gal. v. 21*, *Doct. 9*, and, "of God;" see upon *Eph. v. ver. 5*. And he sheweth that one piece or evidence of their worthiness and meetness to enjoy this kingdom consisteth in their "suffering for it," and for their walking in the way of faith and obedience which leadeth to it; which is not to be so taken as if their sufferings could make them worthy of heaven by way of merit, see *Rom. viii. 18*, but only they did pre-suppose faith in Christ, *Phil. i. 29*, and so did evidence their right to heaven, seeing faith doth give a right unto it, *John iii. 16*; as also sanctified sufferings through God's blessing do purge away sin and promote the work of sanctification in those who suffer, *Isa. xxvii. 9*, and so do polish and make them meet for heaven, holiness being the way which leadeth to it, *Heb. xii. 14*. Besides, the Lord hath bound himself by promise that they who suffer with him shall also reign with him, *2 Tim. ii. 12*, and so their sufferings did make them meet for heaven as being a qualification of those to whom heaven is promised.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the Lord's allowance unto believers to look upon the day of general judgment, and the approaching of it, with cheerfulness and courage, and so as to draw comfort, under all their sufferings, from the faith of it; yea, and though the remembrance of this day be terrible to men unrenewed, *Acts xxiv. 25*, yet it is most comfortable unto believers when they are in a good case and temper: as knowing that then all their wrongs shall be righted, *Psa. xxxvii. 6*; the atheistical suggestions of Satan, in prejudice of God's overruling providence wholly refuted, *Mal. iii. 18*; the bride, the Lamb's wife, completely, and in all her members, glorified, *Rev. xxi. 2—9*; and they themselves fully freed from all sin and misery, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God unto all eternity, *1 Thess. iv. 17*. For he laboureth to persuade them that this day of general judgment would come, that from the faith of it they might draw their comfort: "Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God," saith he.

2. The most grown and praiseworthy faith and patience are not so perfect, but they are in hazard to be shaken and brangled by continued trouble and trial, and stand in need to be supported by God, and underpinned by such consolations as the Lord hath stored up in his word, that they faint not; for notwithstanding he hath presently shown how much he had gloried in their faith and patience, yet he seeth it necessary, for their further support and comfort, to show them that their patient suffering was "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God."

3. As that excellent truth concerning the day of God's most righteous judgment doth hardly, and with great difficulty, get credit, some being wholly unwilling, *2 Pet. iii. 3, 4*, and others not able to believe it as they gladly would, *Mark ix. 24*; so there is no truth, or article of our faith, whereof more convincing proofs and infallible demonstrations may be had than of this, for not only hath the Spirit of God frequently and plainly asserted it, *John v. 28, 29*, but also every particular injury which the Lord's people do suffer from men, and is not righted in this life, is an infallible argument and cogent proof that this day shall most undoubtedly come. So that there are infinite proofs, because there are infinite wrongs of that sort: "Which," saith he, "is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God."

4. The comforts of the Lord's people, under their saddest sufferings from men, are near at hand, if their eyes were not sometimes shut, that they cannot see them; yea, so nigh, that every cross of that kind hath an excellent cordial of sweetest comfort in its bosom, and the greater their cross is, the sweeter is the comfort which is brought along with it, and in it: for he affirmeth that their unjust sufferings, and their patience under them, are so many "tokens of the righteous judgment of God."

5. The day of general judgment, and the remembrance of it, can prove comfortable only to such as may upon solid grounds expect a favourable sentence on that day from Christ the Judge;

for the comfort propounded doth not lie wholly in this, that the righteous judgment of God shall come, but also that the event of it shall be good as to them: even "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God," saith he.

6. As none shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven but those whom God maketh fit and meet for it, though not by making them to merit heaven, (for it is the gift of God, Rom. vi. 23,) yet by working in them all those gracious qualifications, which are required in those upon whom he hath bound himself by gracious covenant and promise to bestow eternal happiness, Col. i. 12, with 13, 14; so the main business of the day of God's righteous judgment, at least that piece of it wherein the comfort of believers doth chiefly lie, shall be in the Lord's judicial accepting, and public declaring, that the persecuted godly (whom wicked men did judge the scum and off-scouring of the world, 1 Cor. iv. 13,) are worthy, fit, and meet to reign with him for ever. Which gracious acceptance of his, though it be really past, Eph. i. 6, and intimated to their own consciences here on earth, 1 John iii. 19, yet the public manifestation of it, in the view of angels, devils, and reprobates, is reserved until that day, and shall be then performed; for he sheweth that the end and event of the righteous judgment of God is, that they may be counted judicially accepted, and declared "worthy" and meet for "the kingdom of God." Now, he accounteth and declareth none meet for it but those who are made meet.

7. As the kingdom of heaven and glory is worthy to be suffered for, and will be so esteemed of by all them who shall one day be counted worthy of it, and meet for it; so, such ill will hath Satan that any should enjoy that kingdom, which he himself hath irrecoverably lost, 2 Pet. ii. 4, and such is the hatred of wicked men, though not to heaven itself, yet to the way of faith and obedience which leadeth to it, that there is none who entereth that way, who may not expect the utmost of Satan's and wicked men's malice to pursue them in it, and that mainly because they walk in that way, whatever be those other pretexts which their persecutors may hold out, 2 Tim. ii. 9; for he affirms they did suffer for the kingdom of God, and makes that an evidence that they shall be accounted meet for it: "For which ye also suffer," saith he.

VER. 6. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7. And to you who are troubled rest with us,

He doth here prove that their patient suffering of injuries from men was an infallible proof of the righteous judgment of God, and that the event thereof shall be such to Christian sufferers as he hath presently affirmed; and that because it is "a righteous thing with God," or a thing that his most righteous nature did oblige him to, even to "recompense" and repay trouble unto all such as did unjustly persecute and "trouble them" for righteousness' sake, ver. 6, and to recompense and bestow "rest" from all trouble and labour to those who are put to trouble and

hardship by men for love to their duty; and that "with us," to wit, with the apostles and others; whereby he doth not only commend this excellent rest unto them, as being a rest with such, but doth also show them that he did not now speak of a thing uncertain, but what he had the faith of as to his own particular. And whereas he saith that God's "righteous" nature doth no less bind him to this than to the former, the meaning is not as if this blessed rest had been merited by them, as trouble and torment was by their persecutors, Rom. vi. 23, but because Christ had merited this rest for them, Rom. iii. 26; and God, of free grace, hath obliged himself to bestow this rest upon them, Matt. v. 11, 12, and therefore it is a righteous thing with God to recompense it to them: as "righteousness" is taken elsewhere for his faithfulness in keeping promise, see Psa. cxliii. 1; 1 John i. 9. From all which he doth leave it unto them to gather, that, seeing this recompense was not given now, but all things were almost contrary, there could be no surer demonstration of a day coming wherein the Lord in righteousness shall give it to the full, which he doth here intend to prove.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whatever is righteous with God, and judged so by him, shall undoubtedly come to pass; and, therefore, though for the time truth may fall in the streets, and equity cannot enter, Isa. lix. 14, yet either now or afterwards judgment shall return unto righteousness, and the cause which is accounted righteous with God shall have the upper hand; for his scope is to prove that there shall be a day of God's righteous judgment, because it is a righteous thing with God that it should be so, even to "recompense trouble," &c.

2. It is the ordinary lot of the Lord's people, and a thing which the Lord would have them undoubtedly to expect, to meet with an unjust measure and unrighteous sentence from the judgment-seats of men, who do usually, either through blindness of judgment, Acts iii. 17, or perverseness of will, Zech. vii. 9, with 11, condemn the innocent, and absolve the guilty; for, while he saith that the rendering unto every man his due is "a righteous thing with God," he secretly implieth that the doing so much is not often judged righteous by men.

3. The Lord alloweth his persecuted people to comfort themselves under their saddest sufferings from the faith of this, that the Lord shall, either now or afterwards, one time or other, reckon in wrath and strictest justice with their obstinate and godless persecutors. And therefore the Lord's people may and should comfort themselves, and rejoice in the approaching ruin of their enemies, though not as it is their misery, Job xxxi. 29, yet as the necessary result of their ruin is God's glory, Psa. lix. 13, and as it shall be made thereby evident that God hath owned the righteous quarrel for which the godly suffer, Psa. lvi. 10, 11, and as their rest from trouble shall necessarily go along with the ruin of their enemies; for, in order to their comfort under persecution, he doth mind them of that recompense of trouble which was to come upon their godless persecutors: "Seeing it is a righteous

thing," saith he, "to recompense trouble unto them who trouble you."

4. Though some, who for the present are most godless persecutors, may afterwards turn to God and obtain mercy, 1 Tim. i. 13, in which case the stroke of divine justice due to such hath lighted upon Christ the surety, Isa. liii. 5; yet, as the most part of cruel persecutors do persist impenitent, so the heaviest dint of divine vengeance shall undoubtedly fall on such in the day of God's most righteous judgment; for, while he mentioneth only persecutors here, as those upon whom God is bound in righteousness to execute judgment, he implieth that many of such shall die without mercy, and shall be most severely judged at the last day: "To recompense trouble unto them that trouble you," saith he.

5. The righteous judgment of God may be seen, not only in his causing wrath and vengeance to follow where sin hath gone before, but also, and mainly, in the nature and kind of those judgments which he doth inflict; in so far that, in some respects, they answer and are suitable unto the sin for which they are inflicted, so that wicked men may in their sin foresee their stroke, and in their stroke may read the sin for which they are stricken, Jude 1, 7: for he doth make it "a righteous thing with God," not only to inflict judgment for sin upon the wicked, but also such judgments as are most suitable to their sin, even "to recompense trouble unto them that trouble you," saith he.

6. This present time is a time of trouble, and not of rest, unto the people of God. Their trouble is now, what from men, Matt. x. 22, what from devils, Eph. vi. 12, what from a body of sin within them, Rom. vii. 24, what from their own consciences, which, sometimes with ground, Psa. xxxii. 3, and sometimes without ground, Psa. lxxxviii. 3, do vex and trouble them, and what from God himself, Job vi. 4, who doth not see a constant rest here to be fitting for them, Psa. lv. 19. But their rest in all these respects shall be afterwards; for, while he saith, "It is a righteous thing with God" to give the godly who are troubled "rest in the day of his righteous judgment," he doth tacitly imply that they have not rest here.

7. The wisdom of God hath so contrived the way of the elect's salvation, as not only mercy in God, but also his provoked justice, is satisfied with it, yea, and engaged for it; so far will justice be from standing in opposition to it: for, he saith, "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense rest unto you who are troubled."

8. It addeth much to the excellency of that rest which remaineth unto the people of God, that it shall not be enjoyed by one alone, or some few only; but all the saints, from the most eminent unto the meanest, shall be co-partners in it, in so far as, though the glory of all shall be derived immediately from God, 1 Cor. xv. 28, yet the presence of all the glorified saints shall make their glory the more desirable, and the joint concurrence of them all in one and the same song of praise to God and the Lamb, Rev. vii. 9, 10, shall doubtless, by reason of the concord and harmony flowing from it, make their song the sweeter; for he commendeth this excel-

lent rest from this, that the apostles, prophets, and such eminent saints as they should share with them, and they with those in that rest: "And to you who are troubled rest with us," saith he.

VER. 7. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8. In flaming fire—

The apostle doth here enter a second ground of consolation, or rather enlarge and clear the former, while he condescendeth upon the day wherein the forementioned retribution shall be made, to wit, the day appointed for the last judgment; and thence doth take occasion, for the greater comfort of the persecuted godly, and terror of their godless persecutors, to describe that day, first, from the glorious manner of Christ's coming to judgment on it, set forth in three expressions: first, he shall "be revealed from heaven," his glorious human nature, for the time contained and hid from us in the heaven, Acts iii. 21, shall then appear to our eyes and senses, Rev. i. 7; and not only appear, but also locally descend unto the air, 1 Thess. iv. 16, from the highest heavens to which he once ascended, Eph. iv. 10. Secondly, he shall come accompanied with a glorious train and retinue of a "thousand" times ten thousands (Jude 14) of the blessed "angels," here called "mighty," to show that they shall be fitted for their work wherein they will be then employed, and, more particularly, to gather the elect, Matt. xxiv. 31, and to execute his terrible sentence against the reprobate, Matt. xiii. 41. This is contained ver. 7. Thirdly, he shall come "in flaming fire," by which the heavens and earth, which now are, shall be dissolved and burnt up, 2 Pet. iii. 10—12, and damned reprobates shall be tormented, Heb. x. 27.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though the souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, Heb. xii. 23, yet their happiness is not then complete, nor before the end of time in the day of God's righteous judgment; in so far as their bodies shall lie dissolved in the grave until then, Job x. 26, 27, and then being raised in glory, they shall be united unto their souls, John v. 28, 29, and the whole man perfectly and unchangeably blessed, 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. The Lord having so provided, that neither our forerunners without us, nor we without our after-comers, shall be completely glorified; but the headstone of glory being put upon all at once, the glorifying of Christ in them, and of them in Christ, may be the more solemn and glorious: for he sheweth that the recompense of rest will be "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed," &c. and not until then.

2. It may contribute not a little to the comfort and encouragement of Christian sufferers, and the terror of their godless persecutors, to know not only that a day of general judgment shall be, but also in that day the Lord Jesus shall be judge; even he, for whom the godly suffered, Acts v. 41; who gave himself to death that he might save them, Eph. v. 25—27; who is their head,

Eph. i. 22; their husband, 2 Cor. xi. 2; their dearest friend, Cant. v. 16; and therefore he cannot choose but pass a favourable sentence on them; and it is he whom wicked men despised, Isa. liii. 3; whose gracious offers they rejected, Matt. xxiii. 37; whose servants, friends, and followers they set at nought and persecuted, Gal. iv. 29; and therefore there can be none whose terrible sentence they have more reason to fear than his: for in order to the main scope, which is to comfort the persecuted godly, and, as a mean subservient thereto, to terrify their godless persecutors, he sheweth that Christ shall be the judge. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed," &c. saith he.

3. Though there be much revealed, preached, and made known of Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 17, yet he remaineth obscure and hid. The wicked do not know him at all, as not believing the truth of what they hear concerning him, Isa. liii. 1, until they see it to their own unspeakable sorrow and grief, Rev. i. 7, yea, and even the godly do but know in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, and cannot comprehend by faith, and at a distance, the hundredth part of that excellency and beautiful glory, which they shall find him adorned with when they shall see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; besides that his bodily presence is, for the time, kept up from their eyes, the curtain of the highest heavens being interposed betwixt them and that glorious sight, for, while he saith, "the Lord Jesus shall be then revealed," it is implied that until then he is in a manner hid.

4. It may also contribute much to the comfort of the godly, and terror of the wicked, that Jesus Christ the judge shall come, not in a state of humiliation, as he did at the first, when his divine glory was so much covered over with the veil of human (though sinless, Heb. iv. 15,) infirmities, that a natural eye could see no beauty in him for which it should either desire him or fear him, Isa. liii. 2; but he shall come as an exalted king, accompanied with a glorious train of mighty angels, to execute what sentence shall be passed; from whom as the godly can expect nothing but favourable dealing, as from their dearest friends, their fellow servants, Rev. xxii. 9, and those who are employed by Christ the judge to bring about the good of the elect, and, in a manner, to serve them while they are here on earth, Heb. i. 14: so the wicked can expect nothing but the certain and summary execution of their dreadful sentence from those blessed creatures, designed executioners for that very thing, whom the damned reprobates cannot resist, they are so mighty and strong, Psa. ciii. 20; nor flee from, they are so swift, Isa. vi. 2; nor move with flattery and requests, they are so true unto their trust, Psa. ciii. 21; for in order to the comfort of the one and terror of the other, he sheweth how Christ shall come accompanied with a glorious train of "mighty angels."

5. Even those things which are in themselves most terrible, and shall be so to godless reprobates at Christ's second coming, have in them matter of comfort and encouragement unto the godly; and, in particular, those very flames which shall put those heavens and earth, which now are, all in a blaze, and, consequently shall

prove a most terrible and saddening sight unto the wicked, when all their delightful idols are burnt up and destroyed before their eyes, and that flame of fiery wrath then kindled shall devour themselves unto all eternity; even those terrible flames shall be a comfortable sight unto the godly, yea, and the forethoughts of them may and should yield comfort to them under their present trouble, as knowing that the more terrible that judgment is, which doth remain for their adversaries, the more are they both in their persons and cause owned by the Lord, for clearing whereof he will give such evident proofs of his wrath, against all who will not favour them as he doth; for in order to their comfort, he sheweth that "Jesus the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire."

VER. 8. Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

He describeth the day of judgment, secondly, from a twofold end of Christ's coming on it, and jointly cleareth that twofold retribution spoken of, ver. 6, 7. The first end relateth to the wicked; "He shall come to take vengeance on them," that is, to proceed against them as a wrathful judge, with all extremity, and without any mixture of mercy, for "vengeance" signifieth a wrathful retribution of evil; and those upon whom he shall take vengeance are of two sorts, 1. All those, whether Pagans or professed Christians, "who know not God," and are ignorant of what may, and is necessary in order to salvation to be known of him. 2. All those among Christians, who though they have some knowledge of gospel truths, yet do not yield that subjection and obedience thereunto, which is enjoined by it; the greatness of which sin of disobedience to the gospel is hinted at in this, that the gospel is here called "the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, a doctrine which he hath revealed, and which treateth of him, and the way of acquiring a right unto him, and to life eternal through him. So that to slight and disobey the gospel is to slight Jesus Christ, with all the good things purchased by him.

DOCTRINES.

1. Men, by living in their ignorance of God and disobedience to the gospel, do not only wrong themselves and are indeed greatest enemies to their own mercies, but do also injure the Lord, and what in them lieth do put an affront upon him, as if the knowledge of God were not worth the pains, and as if Christ had put himself to unnecessary travail for purchasing life and salvation to sinners, the offer whereof they refused to accept and embrace; for while he saith, "the Lord Christ will take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel," it is implied that there is a wrong and injury offered to God in their ignorance and disobedience, for which he will avenge himself upon them.

2. As God's vindictive justice shall seize upon others, besides bloody persecutors, in the great day, even upon all who know not God and obey

not the gospel; so it shall prove no comfort at all unto damned reprobates, that an innumerable multitude shall be damned with them, but rather augment their torment and horror; for he sheweth that the Lord will take vengeance, not only upon avowed persecutors, of whom he spoke before, ver. 6, but also upon all that "know not God, and obey not the gospel," and this to increase terror to those cruel persecutors, who shall much less escape.

3. Though there be a great difference betwixt law and gospel, the former only commanding, the latter also holding forth promised furniture and strength, for enabling us to obey the former, admitting of no less than perfect obedience, Gal. iii. 10, and personal satisfaction for our disobedience, Gen. ii. 17, the latter accepting sincerity instead of perfection, Matt. xxv. 21, and satisfaction by a cautioner instead of our own, 2 Cor. v. 21; yet there is no such difference betwixt them, as if the law only did command and the gospel only promise. No, the gospel hath its own commands as well as the law, yea, commandeth the same things which the law commandeth, with respect had to the forementioned differences and others of that kind; for while he speaketh of them, "that obey not the gospel," it is implied that the gospel doth command and enjoin.

4. The Lord's will is not the only cause of the reprobate's condemnation, he condemneth none but for their sin, and those whose ignorance and disobedience have first procured their condemnation; so that the very consciences of most godless reprobates shall be made to subscribe to their own condemnation as most equitable and just: for he pointeth at their ignorance and disobedience as causes of their condemnation, while he saith, "the Lord Christ will take vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the gospel."

5. Suppose a man might know very much, yea, and obey the law unto the utmost of what his abilities can reach, yet if he do not obey the gospel, and, more especially, that great command of the gospel to believe and accept an offered Saviour, 1 John iii. 23, he cannot be saved, the least sin which ever he committed will be in that case of itself sufficient to condemn him; for so much is clear, while it is said, "Christ will take vengeance on them who obey not the gospel," whatever be their knowledge, obedience, or disobedience otherwise.

VER. 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

He doth here set forth the terror of that vengeance which shall be then inflicted upon the ignorant and disobedient; first, from the kind of it, it shall not be an ordinary loss, but a "destruction," both of soul and body, from which there shall be no escaping, 1 Thess. v. 3, and yet not an utter abolishing of their nature and being, as the destruction of beasts is, but of their well-being and joy, as the destruction of the fallen angels was, Jude 6, 7; and therefore it is set forth, next, from the continuance of it. It shall be "eternal." The word signifieth properly a thing always existing and never ending. They

shall still be dying an immortal death and yet never dead. 3. From the great loss which they shall sustain by this destruction. They shall never behold the Lord's gracious "presence," but be banished from it unto all eternity: or rather the efficient cause or mean of this destruction is hereby pointed at, the very presence of Christ the judge shall torment them, and his infinite "glorious power" drive them away, as unworthy to stand in his sight, to the place of torment prepared for them, and shall perpetuate their torment by upholding them in their being under it.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though there be degrees of torment among the damned in hell, Matt. xi. 12, yet the pain and torment of all shall agree in those; the total destruction of their well-being and joy, the eternity of that destruction, and an utter estrangement from any mixture of comfort, and from God's presence the fountain from whence comfort doth flow; for he saith, that, not only avowed persecutors, but all the ignorant and disobedient, "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

2. When the ransom for sin paid by Christ is not embraced, there is no remedy but the sinner himself must undergo the stroke of divine justice for those sins which he hath committed; for those who obey not the gospel by accepting an offered ransom "shall be punished with everlasting destruction."

3. As divine justice will never cease to pursue the damned sinner, until complete satisfaction be given for all his sins; so the wrong done against an infinite God by sin is such that damned sinners, notwithstanding all the torture and torment both in soul and body that they can endure, shall never be able unto all eternity to satisfy for it: for, saith he, "they shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Their debt will never be paid, and they shall not come out of prison until they pay the uttermost farthing, Matt. v. 26.

4. Though the consciences of godless reprobates are now, for the most part, dead and seared, Eph. iv. 19, yet when Christ the judge shall come to reckon with them, their consciences shall be so vigorous, quick, and lively, that, being convicted and condemned by their own consciences already, they shall not endure to behold the presence of Christ the judge; for the very presence of Christ the judge shall torment them, which could not be, if their own consciences did not convince them and powerfully check them for their many by-past injuries done to him. "They shall be punished from the presence of the Lord," saith he.

5. Though the sentence pronounced against wicked men by their own consciences now is not presently executed, and so the less feared by them, Eccl. viii. 11; yet no sooner shall they pass sentence in the great day, or rather second the sentence which will be passed against them by Christ the judge, but presently and without delay the glorious power of their judge, by the ministry of his mighty angels, will cause the sentence quickly, and without the least reprieve, be put in execution; so that in all probability there shall be no long process, but a quick and sudden

dispatch; for no sooner shall Christ's presence, meeting with their self-condemning consciences, begin to torment them, but as soon his glorious power shall be employed to accomplish and continue their torment. "They shall be punished from the presence of the Lord, and from his glorious power," to wit, jointly and without intermission.

VER. 10. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Here is the second end of Christ's coming, and it relateth to the godly, called here, 1. Saints; strictly taken for those who are inherently holy, and real students of and proficient in, that sanctification which is described upon 1 Thess. iv. 3; next, "believers," who are endued with the grace of saving faith, described 1 Thess. i. 3; and "all" such believers, and no doubt all such saints also, are to share in the end of Christ's coming here mentioned, which is "to be glorified in them," that is, to put such a glory upon them (both in soul, Matt. xxii. 30, and body, Phil. iii. 21,) as he himself shall be thereby glorified. Not only shall the glorified saints themselves give glory to him, but the glory of his mercy, power, goodness, and other attributes, shall in their glory be made manifest unto all the world, upon occasion whereof the glorified angels also shall glorify him. The apostle adds, that Christ, the judge, shall also be "admired in them," that is, shall put such glory on them as never was expected, neither by themselves or others, Isa. lxiv. 4; and therefore it shall be admired by all beholders, and the mercy, power, and grace of Christ, the bestower, shall be admired and wondered at much more. Only the apostle having first, as it were, at the by and in a parenthesis, applied this general ground of consolation to them in particular, by giving a reason for his so doing, to wit, "because they had believed," and given credit unto the doctrine of the gospel, to the truth whereof he and his associates had given testimony, he doth, in the end of the verse, again repeat the time when this shall be, to wit, in that day of Christ's second coming, and not until then, hereby to put a stop to their precipitancy in hastening too much after it.

DOCTRINES.

1. Jesus Christ the judge shall not be so much transported with rage and fury against the wicked, in the day of general judgment, as to make him forget his tender mercies unto the godly: he knoweth how to make the same day the greatest for terror unto his foes, and yet the greatest for joy unto his friends; for Paul sheweth that he shall take vengeance upon the one, and be glorified in the other, both in one day: "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints." Yea,

2. The great errand of Christ's coming to general judgment, is not so much to render vengeance unto the wicked, as to glorify and save the godly, the former being in some respect but as a mean to set forth the glory and solemnity of

the latter, Rom. ix. 22, 23; for looking narrowly to the text, we find that Christ doth take vengeance, as it were, but in the by, when he shall come, as it were of purpose, to put glory on his people: "Taking vengeance on them that know not God," saith he, ver. 8, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints."

3. The rest remaining to the now afflicted and troubled people of God is a glorious rest, and therefore not a total cessation from all action and duty, as lifeless stones, (that rest should have no glory in it,) but from the sin, infirmities, and misery with which they are encompassed and attended now in the way of duty, and from all such duty as implieth any want or imperfection in the performer; otherwise their rest were not completely glorious; for Paul expounding and clearing the rest which was promised, ver. 7, saith, "He shall come to be glorified in his saints."

4. Though the glory of Christ the judge will be set forth, to the admiration of all beholders, in the pouring forth of his wrath and vengeance upon godless reprobates, his proud and obstinate enemies; yet his glory will be incomparably more and more admired in his putting glory upon the elect, in so far as the reprobate shall receive but what they deserve; but as for the elect, besides the wonderful change which shall be wrought in them, the glory put upon them shall be without, yea, and contrary to their deserving; for Paul saith, "He shall come to be glorified and admired in his saints;" as if his glory, to be had in judging reprobates, were no glory, being compared with that.

5. There is such a necessary connexion betwixt the glory of Christ, and the glory wherewith the elect shall be glorified in heaven, that the former is the result of the latter. Christ the Head is glorified in that glory which he himself hath procured for, 2 Tim. i. 10, and shall bestow upon, his members, 2 Tim. iv. 8; and therefore we neither need nor should separate God's glory from our own salvation, but are to seek the latter jointly with and in subordination to the former; for Paul sheweth that Christ shall be glorified in their glory: "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints."

6. Though there be much foretold in Scripture of the glory which shall be put upon the Lord's people in the last day, 1 John iii. 2, yet that which is revealed to that purpose is so little believed, Mark ix. 24, and cometh so far short of that height of glory wherewith they shall be then adorned and crowned, that heaven and happiness shall be a far other thing than ever entered in the heart, not only of natural men, but also of the godly themselves, to think upon; for therefore the first sight of it shall strike them with admiration, as at a thing beyond their expectation and hope: "He shall come to be admired," saith he.

7. As heaven and glory shall be enjoyed only by believers and saints, so all those are saints who are believers, and all are believers who are saints; there being an inseparable connexion betwixt saving faith and inherent holiness, as betwixt a necessary cause and the effect which floweth from it; for he putteth the saints, and them that believe, the one for the other, and

showeth that glory is the portion of such only: "To be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

8. Though there be degrees of glory in heaven, Dan. xii. 3, yet the meanest believer shall enjoy so much as the most enlarged heart cannot once imagine or comprehend while we are here; for Paul saith, "He will be admired in all them that believe," even the meanest believer not excepted.

9. Our choicest comforts, while we are here on earth, consist in those things which we have not in hand, but shall enjoy hereafter; and therefore the more we exercise our faith and patience, our comforts will prove the more satisfying and lively; for he shows that the great and good things which are here spoken of in order to their comfort, shall not be performed before the last day: "To be admired," saith he, "in all them that believe in that day."

10. We are not bound to believe any other doctrine, as necessary to salvation, but that whereof it can be made out convincingly that the apostles and other penmen of holy Scripture, directed infallibly by the Spirit, have given testimony unto; for, saith he, "our testimony was believed among you."

11. As it is the duty of Christ's ministers to make application of general promises unto the particular case of the Lord's people to whom they are sent; so they should carefully guard lest they apply those promises unto any but such as are so qualified as the promise doth require; otherwise they speak peace to whom the Lord doth not speak peace; for the apostle applyeth the general comfort unto them in particular, having found them endued with faith, that necessary qualification which is required in the person to whom the promise doth belong; "Because our testimony was believed among you," saith he.

VER. 11. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

In this and the following verse is contained a fourth ground of consolation for them under their present sufferings, the sum whereof is, that he and his associates did earnestly pray to God on their behalf, where, besides the act of "praying," and praying for them "always," of which, (see 1 Thess. v. 17,) there is, first, the occasion of their prayer, pointed at in the word "wherefore," or, for this cause, which relateth to the foregoing purpose, to wit, because Christ was to come to be glorified in believers, and because they in particular were believers, therefore he and his associates did pray for them. Next, there are the things prayed for: first, "That God," whom he appropriates to himself as his God by covenant, "would count them worthy," or judge them fit and meet (see upon ver. 5,) "for this calling," that is, to enjoy that glory unto which they are called; for they were called already, and therefore "calling," here, must not be taken for God's act in calling them, but for that unto which they

were called, even the kingdom of God, spoken of ver. 5. Next, that, in order to this, God would "fulfil," or fully perform and accomplish, "his good pleasure" concerning them, that is, his eternal purpose of election, called usually by the name of "good pleasure," Eph. i. 5, 9, and "all his good pleasure," that is, all things which he had purposed in that decree to bring about for them, even salvation, and all things pre-required to it. And it is called the good pleasure "of his goodness," to show that nothing but his own goodness, and proneness to communicate good from himself to others, was the cause and motive of that decree. (See Eph. i. 4, Doct. 7.) 3dly. That the Lord, by his own omnipotent "power" would fulfil, and, by fulfilling, preserve, actuate, increase, and fortify the "work of faith" in them, or the grace of saving faith with all its gracious effects, the saving graces of God's Spirit.

DOCTRINES.

1. As it is our duty, in the constant course of our prayers to God, to mind the case of others, and especially of those who suffer for truth, because their temptations to fall are strong, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 10, 14, 15, and the glory of God and edification of the church are in a singular manner concerned in the standing, 2 Tim. ii. 10; so it is a choice ground for comfort and encouragement unto suffering Christians, to know they have the prayers and best wishes of those who are dear to God, sent up to the throne of grace daily for them. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, James v. 16; for Paul did pray always for those suffering Thessalonians, and doth let them know so much for their encouragement: "Wherefore also we pray always for you."

2. As it is the duty of pastors to pray to God for the Lord's people, as well as it is to preach unto them; so the more a people do thrive in grace by a minister's pains, and the more ground of confidence is afforded to him by their carriage that it shall be eternally well with them, the more will his encouragement be, and his engagements the deeper, to pray to God for them. A stubborn and graceless people do prove a dead and heartless weight for a minister to stand under, and to lift at before the Lord; for Paul did always pray for this people, and was encouraged thereto from their growth in grace, formerly mentioned, and more especially from the evidence he had of their eternal well-being, in their believing his testimony, mentioned ver. 10, and related unto here in the causal particle "wherefore;" "Wherefore also we pray always for you."

3. It is the duty of those who have gotten their interest in God made clear, to improve their interest in him and familiarity with him for the behoof, not of themselves alone, but of others also; this being the only way to recompense the tender bowels of others to them, who employed their power with God for their behoof, when possibly they themselves were strangers to him; for Paul improveth his interest in God for them, while, in praying to God on their behalf, he calleth him "his God;" "that our God," saith he, "would count you worthy."

4. As none are worthy, fit, or meet for heaven but those whom the Lord hath drawn out of nature to the state of grace, in their effectual calling, seeing no unclean thing can enter there, Rev. xxi. 27; so there is nothing in us, either before or after our effectual calling, which makes us worthy of heaven, or meet for it by way of merit, but all our fitness and worth of that kind doth come from God's gracious acceptance, his vouchsafing and accounting of us as such; for if we were worthy of heaven by our own merit, to what end doth he pray to God that he "would count them worthy" of it? And he expreseth heaven by the name of "calling," to show that none but called ones are worthy of it and fit for it.

5. As none shall be accounted and declared worthy in the last day to enter the joys of heaven but those whom God, by his eternal decree and good pleasure, hath appointed for it; so the Lord, in that his eternal decree, hath not appointed heaven for any but those whom he hath appointed also in the same decree to make meet for it: for the connexion of the two first petitions teacheth both that God's good pleasure and decree is anterior to their being accounted worthy, and that God's good pleasure is fulfilled and executed in God's counting them meet and worthy, and consequently in his making them so: "And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness."

6. As this eternal decree of election is extended unto more things than one, even to the salvation of the elect, and all the means tending to it; so it is in all respects fully free, and had its rise not from any foreseen goodness in us, but from the mere good-will and goodness of God; for therefore doth he call it "all the good pleasure of his goodness."

7. As God doth not accomplish all the good pleasure of his goodness unto the elect at once, but by degrees and measures, until it be fully accomplished in glory, Matt. xxv. 34, so though no endeavours of ours could have any influence on God for moving him to enact such a gracious decree in our favour, Rom. ix. 11, yet they may promote the execution of it; and especially fervent prayer is a mean appointed by God for furthering this decree to its full accomplishment; for the apostle, by praying unto God that "he would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness," doth intimate the usefulness of prayer in order to that end.

8. As it is the grace of faith, with all its gracious effects, which in God's account doth fit a man for heaven; so faith, and all the graces of God's Spirit flowing from it, were resolved on by God in the eternal decree of election to be bestowed upon the elect. And therefore foreseen faith did no ways move the Lord to elect any, or one more than another; for the apostle, condescending upon the mean how they may be accounted, and consequently made worthy by God, entreateth him to fulfil the work of faith in them, and maketh this a piece of God's good pleasure of his goodness towards them: "And fulfil the work of faith," saith he.

9. As the grace of faith admits of degrees, and every degree of faith is God's work, so the carrying on of the work of faith, especially in suf-

fering times, from one degree to another, is a task of such difficulty, and meeteth with such opposition from men, from devils, from within a man's self, Luke xxii. 31, 32; that it is not only God's work, but his wonderful work, a work which calleth for omnipotent power to the working of it; for he prayeth that "God may fulfil," or carry on by degrees towards perfection, "the work of faith with power."

VER. 12. That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a third thing in this prayer, the end proposed to be brought about by it, or by the good things sought after in it, to wit, that Christ's name, or himself, with all his glorious attributes, "might be glorified in them," that is, acknowledged and set forth as praiseworthy and glorious by them, both in word and work; and that not only in this life, but also, and mainly in that which is to come, (see ver. 10.) And "that they might be glorified in him," that is, the glory put upon him by them, might reflect upon themselves again; and so the more they glorified him, they might the more be glorified by him. But lest they might take matter of boasting hence, as if their glorifying of Christ did merit glory from him to them, he ascribeth all, even that glory of theirs which had its rise from their glorifying him, not to any merit of theirs, but to God's free "grace" and favour in Christ.

DOCTRINES.

1. A Christian's great design and chief end which he ought to propose unto himself in all his actions is, the glory of God in Christ, and that his praiseworthy attributes of mercy, love, wisdom, justice, &c. as they are glorious in themselves, so they may be acknowledged for such by us, and by others also so far as in us lieth; for the great end of Paul's prayers, and that which he would have them propose to themselves in all their actions is, "that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in them."

2. As the more we set ourselves to glorify Christ, the more of glory will thereby accresse unto ourselves, so we are neither to expect that Christ will glorify us, but in and by our glorifying him, nor yet to account that any true glory or credit to us, but what resulteth from our putting of glory one way or other upon him; for he maketh Christ's glorifying us the result of our glorifying him; "That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him."

3. Grace is the only way to glory, and the glorifying of Christ in us, and of us in him, is the necessary result of Christ's carrying on the work of grace in us according to the good pleasure of his goodness towards perfection. And whatever we be otherwise, if this be wanting, we are dishonourable to Christ, and acquire nothing but shame and disgrace unto ourselves; for he maketh God's fulfilling the good pleasure

of his goodness in the work of faith, the mean both of Christ's glory and theirs; "That the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified," &c.

4. That any thing in us doth glorify Christ, or that any glory doth accrete unto us by our glorifying him, is not to be imputed to the worth or merit of our works; in the best whereof, if the Lord should straitly mark iniquity, there would be found matter of dishonour unto God, and of shame unto ourselves, Isa. lxiv. 6; but it floweth only from God's free grace and favour, which covereth the imperfection of our work, Eph. iv. 32, and accepteth of what is right in it as service to himself, Eph. i. 6; for so much doth he teach, while he saith, "according to the grace of our God."

5. That Jesus Christ is true God appeareth from this, that not only the title of true God may be looked upon here as ascribed unto him, (see John v. 20,) but also that from his grace and favour, all our glory here and hereafter doth flow, and that he is the absolute Lord and dispenser of it, "according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER II.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle doth exhort them to guard against a fabulous error, which did spread among them concerning Christ's second coming, as if it had been to fall out in that present age: which exhortation is first, seriously and at large propounded, ver. 1, 2; next briefly repeated, ver. 3.

In the second part, he doth refute the forementioned error, and foretelleth a general apostasy under the antichrist; which prophecy consists of six branches. In the first, he foretelleth that the antichrist shall be revealed, and bring this apostasy to a head, ver. 3. In the next, the antichrist is described, 1, from his nature; 2, from two of his titles, ver. 3; 3, from two of his properties, his opposition to Christ, and arrogance, both in relation to lawful magistrates, and to God himself; and 4, from the greatness of his power, and the place where he shall exercise it, he shall sit in the temple of God, ver. 4; which doctrine he sheweth was no new invention of his own, ver. 5. In the third branch of the prophecy, he sheweth that antichrist was not yet revealed, because of a stop and impediment in the way of his rising, ver. 6, which should keep him still at under until his removal, ver. 7, after which he would discover himself, ver. 8. In the fourth branch he foretelleth antichrist's ruin, ver. 8. In the fifth, he mentions the means and helps of his advancement, to wit, 1, Satan's assistance; 2, a faculty of working lying miracles, ver. 9; and 3, deceitful false doctrines, ver. 10. In the sixth he sets forth his success and describeth his subjects, 1, from their eternal state, they perish; 2, from the cause of their perishing, to wit, their rejecting of truth, ver. 10, and their believing grossest untruths, the Lord having given them up to the power of error, ver. 11; 3, from

the judgment following upon both the former sins, ver. 12.

In the third part he confirms and comforts them against the power and terror of this apostasy; first, from the certainty of their perseverance and salvation grounded upon their election, ver. 13, which he cleareth from their effectual calling, ver. 14; next, by exhorting them to constancy in the doctrine received, ver. 15; lastly, by praying to God for them, that he would comfort and establish them, ver. 16, 17.

VER. 1. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

The apostle being to establish these Thessalonians in the truth against a spreading error concerning the time of Christ's second coming, (which is expressed, ver. 2,) doth first, in order to that end, "beseech" them lovingly and meekly as "brethren;" secondly, he enforceeth the exhortation, or rather the dissuasive, with a kind of religious adjuration by Christ's second coming, (about which the present error was) and by their "gathering together unto him," to wit, at the last day, when all the elect shall be fully gathered from the four winds, Matt. xxiv. 31, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, 1 Thess. iv. 17; so that he doth in effect obtest them, that as they would have comfort at Christ's second coming, and partake of that glory, which the elect being gathered together shall receive from him then, 1 Thess. iv. 17, so they would obey the present exhortation, and keep themselves at a distance from the following error.

DOCTRINES.

1. The spirit of error is so far from being banished and put to silence by the church's afflictions and weighty sufferings, that it sometimes takes occasion from those to rage the more among a people, who being wearied with the cross, have oft an open ear to receive whatsoever it is, whether truth or error, which promiseth most of present ease, and of a speedy delivery from their present strait; for though this church was presently under a suffering lot, chap. i. 4, yet this error, which did maintain that Christ was presently to come and put an end to trouble at the last day of judgment, did spread fast among them, hence Paul doth seriously exhort them to guard against it. "Now we beseech you, brethren."

2. The ministers of Christ ought so to propound the sweet and ravishing consolations of the gospel to an afflicted people, as they do not omit to press such duties on them as their afflicted state calleth for, or to tax them for yielding in the least to such temptations as Satan takes advantage from their affliction to assault them with; and that because untenderness of this kind doth hinder the most sweet and powerful consolations of the gospel to work and take effect, Jer. xlii. 10, 11, with xlv. 15, &c.; for Paul having comforted this afflicted church, chap. i, doth now exhort them to duty, and indirectly tax them for their being so soon taken with the

present plausible error: "Now we beseech you, brethren."

3. The minister of Christ, as he ought to entertain love betwixt him and the people of his charge, and for that end to deal affectionately with them at all times; so chiefly, when he hath to do with those who are either tainted, or in hazard to be tainted with error, especially so long as they are not incorrigible in their error; and that because a spirit of pride doth usually accompany a spirit of error, so that the person tainted with it can hardly endure to be contradicted, Gal. iv. 16, if he be not convinced that he who contradicts his errors doth love his person, and dealeth affectionately with him; for therefore, while Paul is about to meddle with their error, he dealeth most affectionately with them: "Now we beseech you, brethren."

4. The Lord's minister ought not, under pretence of tender and affectionate dealing with those who are tainted with error, to speak against their errors coldly, as if it were a thing indifferent whether they returned to a right mind or not, but (as he would be faithful to God, Gal. i. 10, and the souls of people, 2 Cor. xi. 3,) he must deal seriously with them, set their hazard before them, and earnestly obtest them, by that which is dearest to them, to quit their error and embrace the contrary truth; for thus doth Paul "beseech" and in a kind adjure them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him."

5. Error about a truth, or any circumstance of it, doth (in so far at least) hinder or endanger the good and comfort which might be otherwise reaped by it; for while Paul obtests them, that as they looked for comfort at Christ's second coming, so they would beware of that error which did antedate the time of it, it is implied that their embracing of that error would in some respect hinder, or at least hazard the comfort which they might have by the faith of that day. "We beseech you," saith he, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

6. As Christ will certainly come to judge the world, and all believers shall be gathered to him, as eagles do resort unto the carcase, Matt. xxiv. 28, so we ought to entertain thoughts of that day, with a kind of religious awe and reverence, to wit, so as we do not mock at it, 2 Pet. iii. 4, but that (certainly believing it will be) we order all our deportment as we may prepare and make ready for it, 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12; for he adjures and obtests them "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him;" now we use not to obtest but by such things which are most certain, and to which we owe a kind of religious respect and reverence.

7. Then is the day of Christ's second coming desirable and precious to us, and thought upon as it ought by us, when having made acquaintance and friendship with Christ our judge, we have ground of confidence that he will not be terrible but friendly to us in that day, otherwise a man can never think upon it with love, desire, and religious reverence, but will abhor the very thoughts of it; for as this obtestation implieth this day to have been desirable unto them, and reverently thought upon by them, so Paul doth

show from what this did flow, even their interest in Christ the judge as theirs, and the hope of their being gathered together among the rest of the elect unto him then; while he saith, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him," he calleth Christ "our Lord," and the gathering, "our gathering."

VER. 2. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

The apostle in this verse doth, first, set forth in general, that from which he doth dissuade them, to wit, first, that they would not be soon shaken, or suffer themselves to be tossed to and fro like the waves of the sea (as the word signifieth) by the winds of false doctrine "in" or from their mind, that is, from their received opinion and judgment concerning the truth in hand, (as the word is rendered, 1 Cor. ii. 16, and xi. 10,) or from the right use of their wit and reason; the loss of which he doth hereby insinuate would be the sad fruit of embracing the present error; and secondly, that they would not be troubled, or suffer themselves to be perplexed, vexed and affrighted with the dreadful representation of approaching judgment, by which, it is like, the promoters of this error did incessantly alarm and affright them; for the word is a metaphor taken from soldiers affrighted with a sudden and dreadful alarm. Next, he condescends upon a threefold deceit, which the maintainers of this error did make use of to seduce and unsettle them, which he exhorts them to vilipend as being of no weight; first, they pretended to the spirit, whereby (as it is contradistinguished to the other two) must be meant some immediate revelations which they did falsely give out themselves to have had from the Spirit of God, Micah ii. 11; next to some unwritten "word," which, as it seemeth, they did falsely allege had been spoken by Paul or some other apostle to that purpose; thirdly, to some epistle written by Paul himself, and this either the former written to this same church, which it seemeth they did wrest to countenance the present error, as if he had taught, 1 Thess. iv. 15, that Christ would come to judgment in that present age, or some other epistle forged by them and fathered upon the apostle; which hath not been unusual even then, as appears from his great care to subscribe every epistle with his own hand for preventing such impostures, chap. iii. 17; lastly, he expresseth the particular error, from embracing whereof he doth so affectionately and seriously dissuade them, to wit, that "the day of Christ," or of Christ's second coming, "was at hand." The word in the original doth differ from that which is 1 Pet. iv. 7, and expresseth so much, as if the day of judgment had been "instantly" to fall out in that very age, which doubtless was the opinion vented by those seducers, and refuted here by Paul. But the word used by Peter, expresseth only that it was drawing near, and in what sense he

would be understood is explained by himself, 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9, to wit, in respect of God, with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. However, Peter doth not condescend upon any peremptory time, neither day, year, nor the present age, as those seducers did.

DOCTRINES.

1. The spirit of error is usually most prevalent and taking with people, when it is first hatched and publicly vented. The newness of the thing, the fair prettexts wherewith it is coloured, and people's inadvertence to what it tendeth, make many without deliberation engage in it, and, being once engaged, to stand to it: and therefore, if the first assault of error were once withstood, and time and leisure taken to advise upon it before we did indeliberately and suddenly close with it, there should not be so much hazard, at least, of being carried away with it: for he beseecheth them that they be not "soon shaken," not as if he did allow them to be shaken provided it were not soon, but because if they did endure the first brunt, and were not soon shaken they would readily not be shaken at all.

2. As a sudden, rash, and unadvised engaging in the way of error is usually accompanied with a spiritual frenzy and madness, and transporteth men beyond the bounds of right reason, both in the defence and propagation of their error, however they may be abundantly rational in their other actings, 2 Cor. ix. 2, with xi. 20; so an unsound and unsettled judgment in the point of truth, is usually accompanied with error and disturbance of the conscience through fears and doubts. And it is the devilish method of Satan's instruments, in seducing the Lord's people, once to unsettle their minds and perplex their consciences thus, that they may hereby make them more pliable to embrace their erroneous doctrine, if so it but seem to promise any ease of mind and peace: for, while he dissuades them from error, he forbids them to be "soon shaken in mind, or troubled;" the latter as a consequence of the former, and both of them intended by their seducers, as tending to make them more pliable to their design.

3. The forementioned dreadful concomitants of error, to wit, infatuation of mind, perplexedness of heart and affections, the rack and horror of conscience, should scare the Lord's people from meddling with, and make them stand aloof from, any thing which tendeth towards it; for, the general part of the dissuasive hath an implicit reason to enforce their standing aback from the particular error, even because thereby "they would be shaken in mind and troubled."

4. As there is not any error vented, the maintainers whereof will not have somewhat to say in its defence, so the taking force of all they say for that end consisteth not in the solidity and truth of what they affirm, but in multitude of words, variety of seeming reasons, a fair flourish of specious prettexts, and in impudent, bold, and strong assertions, thereby holding up their reputation among their devoted followers, Acts viii. 9, 10, and ensnaring the simple, who hardly can put a difference betwixt pretext and reality, confident

assertions and solid proofs, Rom. xvi. 18; for the maintainers of this error did boldly allege no fewer than three heads of most specious reasons, none whereof did prove the truth of their opinion, and therefore he forbids them to be shaken or troubled with any of them, "neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us."

5. Perverse and obstinate seducers do often prove, in the end, blasphemous, and very atheists, in so far as (against the light of conscience) to dare to father their groundless untruths upon an immediate revelation from the God of truth; for those seducers pretended to immediate revelations from the Spirit to confirm their error, wherein they could not but know themselves to be liars. "Neither by spirit," saith he.

6. As heretical spirits do usually prove most malapert and impudent in opposing themselves to most convincing evidences, if it were to outface an immediately inspired apostle; so they are most untender of, and labour to trample upon, the reputation of all who do oppose them, though they be deservedly eminent for their graces, gifts, and station; for those seducers do not only oppose themselves to Paul, an apostle, but also, because of his opposition to them, labour to disgrace him, while they allege he did contradict himself, and that they had a word spoken by him asserting that opinion for truth which he did now condemn, which is implied while he saith, "be not troubled by word, as from us."

7. Heretical spirits and seducers do also often prove most irreligious, as choosing to shake the foundation of all religion, the authority of Scripture, by making one part thereof contradict another, rather than they should have nothing to say for their own credit and to defend their error; for it is implied that in this debate they opposed letter to letter, and scripture to scripture: "Nor by letter, as from us," saith he.

8. Satan's malice and man's impudence did come to that height as to endeavour the corrupting of Scripture, by wresting some parts of it from its genuine sense and meaning, and by forging false scriptures and giving them out for true, even while the apostles themselves were alive to contradict them. Which serveth to commend the watchful providence of God over Scripture, and his mercy towards us, in so far as all the attempts of Satan for that end have been hitherto frustrated, and the Holy Scriptures transmitted, pure and incorrupt, from hand to hand through all generations to this present age: for the "letter" here mentioned was either Paul's former epistle wrested, or a new one forged: "Nor by letter, as from us."

9. It often falleth out that those errors do prove most pestilent and of dangerous consequence, which have the greatest show of piety, and carry with them the least fear of hazard from them at the first view: for this error, that the day of Christ was instantly to fall out, might seem not only a harmless opinion, but also most useful for putting men to their duty in order to their preparation for that day; yet the apostle by this most serious dissuasive from it doth imply that it was an error extremely hazardous; and indeed so it was; for if this opinion had been once received, the truth of the Christian religion,

and chiefly of this particular, should have been exposed to contempt and scorn in the following age, when the event would have fallen out otherwise than this opinion held forth, which doubtless was Satan's great design in fostering it so much: "As that the day of Christ is at hand," saith he.

10. So subtle is Satan, that he can, and sometimes doth, make one error spring out of the ruins of another, yea, and the latter error to resolve in end in the re-establishing of the former, though in itself it be inconsistent with it: and so simple is man, that, under pretence of eschewing one extremity of error, he rusheth forward to the other, by the seen absurdity whereof, and by Satan's subtlety, he is at last constrained to embrace of new his old error, which he had formerly forsaken: for Paul, having laboured in the former epistle to settle them in the faith of the resurrection and of a day of judgment, 1 Thess. iv. 14, &c., in opposition, doubtless, to some who did question those truths, as at Corinth, 1 Cor. xv. 12, some did take occasion hence to run to the other extremity, and maintain that the day of Christ should come to pass in that very age; wherein Satan's design doubtless was to drive them back again to their former error, that there would be no such day at all, when the event should prove their second opinion to be false: "As that the day of Christ is at hand."

VER. 3. Let no man deceive you by any means:

He doth here repeat the former dissuasive from suffering themselves to be "deceived," or (as the word signifieth) led aside from the way of truth, in the former particular, "by any man," though he were never so learned and holy, or "by any means," neither those three mentioned ver. 2, nor by any other.

DOCTRINES.

1. So prone are men by nature to embrace error when it is vended, as being the birth of corrupt natural light, Eccles. vii. 29, and tending of itself to gratify some one or other of our un-mortified lusts, 2 Tim. iv. 3, that there is need of reiterated dissuaves from it, and of often inculcating the self-same things by the Lord's ministers, which may tend to guard his people against the power of it: for he doth here repeat the former dissuasive, "Let no man deceive you."

2. As Satan laboreth to engage men of different ranks and dispositions to be instrumental in carrying on the self-same error, and prompteth them with variety of ways and means for thoroughing of their work, according to the various tempers of the Lord's people whom he intendeth to ensnare, whereof some are more easily wrought upon by one instrument and mean, and some by another; so no consideration of the person tempting, though he were never so insinuating, discreet, holy, and able, or in doctrine otherways orthodox, and no consideration of the means whereby he tempts, (though by pretexts most specious, reasons seemingly probable, authority of men almost unquestionable,) hath in it sufficient ground of excuse unto any for suffering himself to be seduced from truth to error: for he implieth that

there would be several men, and several means, and will have them to stand out against them all, while he saith, "Let no man deceive you by any means."

VER. 3. For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

The apostle, in the second part of the chapter, refuteth the forementioned error from this, that such things behoved to fall out before the day of the Lord as could not come to pass within the compass of that or many ages, whereof he mentions two; first, "a falling away," or, (as it is in the original) an apostasy and defection, not from the Roman empire, as some do expone it, but from Christ and the purity of the gospel. And therefore, in opposition to this apostasy, they are exhorted to "stand fast," not to the Roman empire, but to the truth of the gospel, ver. 13. Besides, it is the same word and the same purpose which is held forth 1 Tim. iv. 1, and the antichrist by whom this apostasy was to be headed is called a false prophet, Rev. xvi. 13, and therefore it must be an apostasy from true doctrine, as the word doth always signify in the New Testament. Neither doth he mean a particular defection of some particular persons or churches; for there were some such defections already, both of persons, 1 Tim. i. 20, and churches, Gal. i. 6; but a general defection of the whole visible church, some few only excepted, Rev. xiii. 8: for therefore is the word "falling away," or apostasy, set down indefinitely, and without any restriction. The second thing which was to fall out antecedently to that day is, the "revealing of the man of sin," the great head and patron of this apostasy, whom all accord to be that great antichrist spoken of 1 John ii. 18, and iv. 3, and the beast mentioned, Rev. xiii. 11, &c.; and the epithets given him here declare so much, though he be not expressly named. Concerning whom the apostle doth first foretell that he "shall be revealed" and made known, though not so as that none should have any doubt concerning him; for then how were it possible that all the world should wonder after the beast, Rev. xiii. 3, neither were such wisdom requisite to find him out and know him as is required, Rev. xiii. 18; yet so, as they to whom the Lord hath given eyes to see shall evidently discern him. Which revealing and making of him known was to be effectuated, partly by the preaching of the gospel which should discover him, (see ver. 8,) but chiefly by his coming to the height of his power, and his exercising of open tyranny over the church of God. Next, that the Lord's people might the better know him when he should discover himself, the Spirit of God doth here describe him, first, from his nature; he shall be a "man," and not a devil, as some did falsely imagine. Now that he is called a "man," in the singular number, with the article prefixed in the original, doth not infer that he should be one single man, and individual person, without succession, as the papists imagine, to defend their pope from being the antichrist here described, but all in vain. For, first, the same

word with the article prefixed doth not always point at one individual person, but sometimes must be extended to many men, or to any man indefinitely, as John ii. 25, 2 Tim. iii. 17. Secondly, that the antichrist cannot be only one individual person, will be clear, if we consider the many great things which Scripture foretelleth shall be effectuated by him; whereof there is one here, to wit, the carrying on of that woful work of an universal apostasy from Christ and truth through the whole Christian world, presently spoken of, unto a height and head, which surely behoved to be a work of more ages than one, otherwise the argument here used by Paul would have been but of small force to prove that the day of judgment should not fall out in the present age, because this falling away and apostasy behoved to be first; it would have been, I say, of no force if that apostasy could have been brought about in the space of one age. Besides, the spirit of antichrist was already working, hidly and in a mystery, in Paul's time, (see upon ver. 7,) and in John's time, 1 John iv. 3, and was to continue until the time of Christ's second coming, (see upon ver. 8,) and consequently he cannot be only one individual person. But therefore, thirdly, by "man," or "that man," here is meant, a series and constant succession of men, of whom one was to succeed another in their grandeur, power, and wickedness against Christ and his church, as if they were all but one man, acted by one and the same spirit, even as the word high priest in the singular number is taken, Heb. ix. 7, 25, and as Daniel, chap. vii. under every one of the four "beasts" doth comprise a number of kings succeeding one another in the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian monarchies; yea, and as shall appear upon ver. 7, the continued series and succession of Roman emperors is spoken of, as of one man withholding the antichrist from coming to the height of his power and greatness. Secondly, the antichrist in this verse is described from two of his titles: first, he shall be a "man of sin;" it is a Hebraism, implying that he shall be a notorious sinner himself, Rev. xiii. 5, 6, and an author of sin to others, Rev. xiii. 12, 14; like Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin, 2 Kings xi. 10. Next, "a son of perdition;" that is, one devoted to destruction, Rev. xvii. 8, as Judas was, who therefore hath the same title, John xvii. 12, and one who should destroy others, and that both spiritually in their souls, Rev. xvii. 2, and corporally in their bodies, Rev. xvii. 6; for which cause he is called Apollyon, or a destroyer, Rev. ix. 11.

Hence learn, 1, as love to ease and desire of freedom from trouble in the Lord's people do make them antedate promised deliveries, and dream of a triumph before they have entered the battle; so the Lord in Scripture doth frequently set himself to dispossess his people of this lazy dangerous humour, by showing that they must first prepare for a long lasting battle before they can expect a complete victory and full triumph: for while these Thessalonians did dream of nothing but of a present delivery from all their trouble by Christ's second coming, the Spirit of God doth here forewarn them to prepare for a long continuing battle with antichrist and his

followers: "For that day shall not come except there come a falling away first," saith he.

2. Not only particular churches and persons, but even the catholic church visible (the elect only being excepted, Matt. xxiv. 24,) may fall away from the purity of the gospel to dangerous and soul-destroying errors; and therefore the church of Rome can have no ground to plead for the contrary privilege, seeing not only her future apostasy is more than intimate, Rom. xi. 20; but also it is here foretold that the anti-Christian apostasy shall, as a deluge, overflow the whole visible church, yea, and Rev. xvii. 9, that antichrist shall erect his throne in the city of Rome itself; for saith he, "except there come a falling away first," to wit, a general apostasy, (see the Exposition.)

3. Not only are the saddest events which can befall the church foreseen by God, and powerfully overruled by him, for his own glory, and the good of his elect, Rom. viii. 28, but he hath also in mercy foreacquainted his church with them, that when they come to pass, none should need to stumble at them; for therefore it is that the Lord doth here forewarn his church of this general apostasy: "Except there come a falling away first."

4. Even Satan's kingdom, and his many instruments under him, are most united in their woful work, and in uniform means and ways for carrying on their work of bearing down the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and therefore that union boasted of so much by Papists can be no infallible mark that they are the true church; for though antichristianism shall be a kingdom made up of divers members, wherein shall be many successive heads in several ages, (see the Exposition,) yet, because of their unity and uniformity in driving on one and the same design, they are all called by the name of one man: "And that man of sin be revealed."

5. One step of apostasy from truth in the church maketh way for a higher. It begins at lesser truths, and from those it advanceth further; Satan doth so design it, that he may gain his intent against truth by piecemeal, which he cannot attain by wholesale; and the Lord himself doth so order it, that he may punish begun apostasy by raining snares in his holy justice upon the guilty, whereby they cannot but backslide more. (See ver. 11.) For he foretelleth that there shall be "first a falling away," and then the "man of sin shall be revealed," or discover himself in his own colours, and be generally received, and so the apostasy should heighten.

6. The nature of man now fallen is a very sink of sin, and being given over of God and tempted by Satan, is ready to fall in any sin, yea to many sins, though never so gross and abominable: and therefore let him that stands take heed lest he fall: for the antichrist is "a man of sin," a man by nature, and yet a sink of all sin, "a son of perdition, an opposer of God and Christ," &c.

7. As where sin goeth before, perdition and destruction do follow after: so the more eminent men are in their personal transgressions, and the more active in driving on others to sin with

them, they may expect the more inevitable and dreadful destruction from the Lord, as their reward; for if antichrist be "a man of sin," a notorious sinner himself, an author of sin to others first, he shall be "a son of perdition" next.

8. Though they who are active in driving others on to sin shall smart most for it, as said is, yet those who are seduced and drawn over by them shall not escape; for as he is the man of sin for his causing others to sin, so a "son of perdition" for bringing spiritual perdition upon them also.

VER. 4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

The apostle doth describe the antichrist, thirdly, from two of his properties; first, "he opposeth himself" or (as it is in the original,) he is a prime opposite or adversary, to wit unto Christ; for therefore he is called "antichrist," 1 John ii. 18; now every heretic is in so far at least an adversary and opposite to Christ, but he in a special manner; for his opposition was, first, to be most potent, as having a fixed orderly kingdom, whereof he is head, set up in opposition to Christ; secondly, more universal, as setting himself to undermine every Christian truth almost; thirdly, he was to oppose Christ especially in those truths relating to Christ's offices to which he was anointed, as the name, "Christ," and "antichrist," in the Greek imply. Only know that what is spoken here of antichrist's opposition to Christ, and afterwards of his showing himself "that he is God," must not be understood as if he would profess so much in words, which the Papists affirm; for, as followeth immediately, he shall sit in the temple of God, and antichristianism is called a mystery, ver. 7, besides he shall be a false prophet, Rev. xvi. 13, and have the horns of the lamb, Rev. xiii. 11, and consequently, a famous hypocrite and dissembler, (as some of the Papists are forced to confess,) yea, and shall be adored by the world of professed Christians, Rev. xii. 13, which is not imaginable, if he were a professed enemy to Christ and an avowed atheist. And therefore his opposition to Christ and God, here spoken of, is real and in deeds, but under a mask and pretence of friendship. The antichrist's second property is his intolerable pride and arrogance, first, in relation to men, and the chief of men, he should exceedingly and above measure "exalt himself," as the word is rendered, 2 Cor. xii. 7, and this, "above all that is called God." I conceive he meaneth not the true God, for he is spoken of after, but earthly magistrates who are called Gods, Psa. lxxxii. 1, above whom he should exalt himself, by usurping power over them to enthronize and dethrone them at pleasure, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, and this not only inferior magistrates and kings over particular kingdoms, but emperors and mighty monarchs over many realms, expressed here in these words, "or that

which is worshipped." The word in the original doth signify that which is holden in highest degree of reverence, whether religious or civil, and with a little variation was an usual style given to the Roman emperors, which did difference them most from other magistrates, Acts xxv. 21, 25. Next, his arrogance is set forth in relation to the true God, which is brought in as a higher step following upon the former, and jointly herewith he gives a fourth branch of his description, from the greatness of his power, and the place where he shall exercise it. First, "he shall sit," the apostle doth not mean local or corporal sitting, but his supreme and settled power, rule, and government, set forth oft by sitting, Psa. ix. 4, Ezek. xxviii. 2. Next, the place wherein he shall sit or rule, is, "the temple of God," not the temple at Jerusalem, (as some Papists affirm, though others of them are forced to acknowledge the truth,) for that temple is ruined many years since, Matt. xxiv. 1, 2, the re-edifying whereof ever since (when several times attempted as histories show) hath been signally impeded from Heaven. And though it should be built again by antichrist to be worshipped therein, yet it could not be called "the temple of God" but rather of the devil: and therefore hereby must be meant the church of God, not so much the material house of stones and timber, where the church doth meet, as the Christian church of visible professors, in which the antichrist shall set himself as head and chief, and which he shall tyrannically oppress. See the temple of God taken in this sense, 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 16. And here, as I formerly said, the apostle intermixeth the second branch of the antichrist's arrogance, to wit, in relation to God, whereby, first, he shall manage his rule and government in the church "as God," pretending to have no less than divine authority, even the same with God and Christ, Rev. xiii. 11. "He shall show himself that he is God," not professing so much in words, as is already proved, but as the Greek word signifieth, showing or attempting to show by his actions that he is no less to be esteemed of than God, while he either attributes unto himself, or suffers others to ascribe unto him and discharge towards him, such things as belong only to God, as divine titles, worship and properties, Rev. xiii. 4.

DOCTRINES.

1. The Spirit of God doth not judge of men so much by what they say, as by what they do; not by fair pretences, but by the reality of their practices, and willett us to judge accordingly: for though the antichrist sit in the temple of God, pretending he doth all things for Christ and at his command, yet because he doth really and in deeds oppose Christ, therefore he is called an opposite to him: "Who opposeth himself."

2. An opposite and adversary to God and Christ doth seldom prove a faithful friend to man; whosoever doth once break his trust to the former, he will not spare to trample upon the latter, if it may conduce for his interest and doth not exceed the reach of his power: for upon the antichrist his opposing himself to God and Christ, doth follow his arrogance to man, in "exalting himself" above the supreme civil ma-

gristrate, even "all that is called God or is worshipped." (See the Exposition.)

3. A spirit of pride and arrogance is insatiable and indefatigable, and extremely daring: it must be all and above all, otherwise it is nothing; and where it is attended with success, it attempteth things almost impossible, and remaineth indefatigable until the height aspired at be once attained: for antichrist in his arrogance, though he be but a false prophet, Rev. xvi. 13, aspireth above kings, yea, emperors, and ceaseth not until he work himself up above them all: "He exalts himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped."

4. One degree of sin doth so much make way for a further, that those things which at the first men do stick at, will, through the continued custom of some lesser degrees of those same evils, be easily swallowed at last and without reluctance; for antichrist's arrogance against man maketh way for his arrogance against God, and hardeneth him in it, as the apostle insinuates, while he saith, "so that he as God sitteth," making this his pride against God follow upon the former.

5. The antichrist is not to be sought without the visible church, neither among the Turks, as some do imagine, nor yet among the Jews, as the Papists do dream, that antichrist shall be one individual person without succession, by nation a Jew, of the tribe of Dan, born of a whore in Babylon, a professed enemy to the very name of Christian religion, shall draw the Jews after him, build the temple at Jerusalem, cause himself to be worshipped therein as the true and living God, and yet be a secret worshipper of the devil, that he will bring all kingdoms under him, reign precisely three years and a half, kill Enoch and Elias the forerunners of Christ, and at last himself be killed by Christ or an angel forty-five days before the day of judgment; which fable, as it is maintained by them to defend their pope from being antichrist, so it appeareth abundantly to be but a fabulous invention, by the whole current of this prophecy, and especially by that which is here affirmed, "he shall sit in the temple of God," and therefore is to be found, not without, but, within the visible church, even a bishop claiming universal authority over the whole church, accompanied with an army of priests; as one of their own popes did maintain a little before the antichrist did come to his height. "He shall sit," saith Paul, "in the temple of God." (See the Exposition.)

VER. 5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

The apostle closeth the former description by giving them a gentle and indirect reproof for their oblivion and ignorance of the truths presently delivered, as that which had unsettled them in the present truth concerning the time of Christ's second coming, and hereby addeth a weight to what he had now written about the antichrist, while he sheweth that it was not a doctrine newly invented, but that he had formerly told them fully of it, and instructed them

in all its particular branches while he was with them at Thessalonica, Acts xvii. 1, 2, and therefore they ought to have remembered it.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the church enjoyeth now and then some peaceable times, wherein the gospel hath free passage without any considerable check or restraint either from error or persecution, so it is the duty both of pastors and people to improve so rich a mercy to the best advantage; and especially then the Lord's servants should give frequent warnings of future evils, that the people of God may forearm themselves against an approaching storm; for while the church at Thessalonica enjoyed some little respite from trouble, Paul doth stir his time among them, and gives them warning that the church's trials under antichrist were coming. "When I was yet with you I told you these things."

2. As it is a blameworthy fault, too frequently incident unto the Lord's people, to forget what necessary truths have been taught unto them by their faithful pastors, and especially those which tend to make them shake off security and ease, and prepare for eminent trials: so forgetfulness of this kind doth encourage Satan to sow among them tares of error, which otherwise he would have but little heart to venture on, as despairing his pains should meet with the desired success; for Paul insinuates they had forgot, and reproves them indirectly for it, as that which had encouraged Satan to brangle them about the time of Christ's coming, which they could not have imagined to come in the present age, if they had but remembered what he had taught them about the antichrist. "Remember ye not," saith he, "I told you these things?"

VER. 6. And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

Because the apostle had shown, ver. 3, that the antichrist must be revealed antecedently to Christ's second coming, he doth now, in the third branch of this prophecy, speak something of the time when he should be revealed, and of the lets and impediments, which for the time did hinder his discovery: and first, he sheweth he was not yet revealed, and therefore they were not to expect the day of Christ's second coming so soon as they did, while he mentions something which did then "withhold," or stay and hinder his revealing and public appearing in the height of his power for a season, the Lord's overruling providence so ordering "that he might be revealed," not before, but, "in his time," that is, the time prefixed by God for that thing. Now by this stop and obstacle in the way of antichrist's rising greatness must be meant some man, person or persons, as appears from ver. 7, where he is spoken of as such, "only he who now letteth;" and the general current of interpreters, both Popish and Protestant, and many ancient fathers also, do agree that hereby is understood the supreme authority and respect of the ancient emperors in the Roman empire, who by their eminent temporal power did hinder the arising of antichrist's spiritual power over the Christian

world, and upon whose ruins the antichrist was to arise, and to possess their throne and seat in the city situate upon seven hills, Rev. xvii. 9, even Rome, that great city, which did then reign over the kings of the earth, Rev. xvii. 18, and though the apostle had expressed so much to them while he was with them, (for therefore he saith they knew what did withhold,) yet he doth not judge it convenient to express it by letter, lest thereby he had provoked the emperors of Rome against the Christians, when they should hear that a professed Christian would overthrow the present government of the empire, and rise upon their ruin.

DOCTRINES.

1. The wise Lord in his eternal decree hath not only condescended, among other things, upon the sad calamities and sharp trials which he hath thought fit to exercise his people by, but also upon the meanest circumstance of all their troubles, even the very point of time, most seasonable for God's glory and his people's good, wherein they shall break forth, is weighed in the scales of his eternal wisdom, and accordingly fixed upon by him; for here Paul speaks of a "due time" prefixed by God, wherein the antichrist was to be revealed for the church's trial, "that he might be revealed in his time." The word signifieth a fit and seasonable nick of time.

2. Such is the malice of Satan and of devilish instruments against the church of Christ, that they gladly would, and accordingly do endeavour to antedate the time of the church's trial prefixed by God, and to hasten forward the height of her calamity with such celerity, as that the Lord's people should be overwhelmed with it, before they be forewarned of it, or get any time to make ready for it; for antichrist would have revealed himself sooner than his due time, if somewhat had not withheld. "And now ye know what withholdeth," saith he.

3. It pleaseth the Lord, in mercy unto his people, to sift the violent course of devils and men, to carry their counsels headlong, so that their hands cannot fulfil their woful enterprise of bringing the church's trouble unto a height, before the time appointed by God, as most fitting for it, do fully come: and this he doth by casting in such lets and impediments as prove insuperable either by devils or men; for while antichrist doth haste to be revealed, God casts in a let to withhold of purpose, "that he might not be revealed before his due time."

4. Such absolute sovereign power hath God to incline the wills of men whithersoever he pleaseth, Prov. xxi. 1, that he often maketh even them who are enemies to him to bring about his counsel for good to his church and people, beyond their own intention and purpose; for God did so order that the Roman emperors, even while heathens, did withhold the antichrist from coming to the height of his power and tyranny over the church, until "his due time."

5. Some points of truth, the publishing whereof are not of such necessity as to countervail the damage, may safely be concealed in prudence, when the untimely publishing of them in all probability will hasten persecution, and mar either

the internal or external peace of the church. Such serpentine wisdom doth well consist with the dove's simplicity and Christian zeal, Matt. x. 16, for Paul doth not here express that the Roman empire by name should withhold, until it were taken out of the way, lest he had thereby hastened persecution. "And now ye know what withholdeth," saith he.

VER. 7. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will* let, until he be taken out of the way.

He doth here, first, give a reason for what he presently spoke, that the Roman empire did impede, not the being, but, the revealing and discovery of the antichrist and antichristianism, because they already had entered the church, though not avowedly, yet secretly. Antichristian dominion and doctrine were even then working and advancing by little and little towards a height, in so far as justification by works, Gal. ii. 16, the worshipping of angels, Col. ii. 18, abstinence from certain kinds of meats, Col. ii. 21, and from marriage, and such like antichristian doctrines, were then preached, and desire of rule and pre-eminence among churchmen over their brethren and the flock of Christ, had then possessed the aspiring spirits of some, 3 John 9. Which antichristian doctrines and tyranny he calls a "mystery," or, a thing hid and secret, chiefly with respect to the apostle's time, and the time following until antichrist should be revealed, because antichristianism then, together with those other heresies which made way for it, did secretly and under a show of devotion and piety, Col. ii. 23, advance and promote from evil to worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13, until they might end in the almost total overthrow of Christian religion at the last. Besides that antichristian doctrine and tyranny were still to remain a mystery, even after that antichrist should come to his height, so that a man, without eyesalve from God, shall hardly discern it, because of the fair pretences of love to Christ, to truth and to piety, under which he was to lurk; for therefore is he called a false prophet, Rev. xvi. 13, and said to have two horns like a lamb, Rev. xiii. 11, pretending to do all in Christ the lamb's name, and to make use of his horns and power as his substitute and vicar. And it is called a "mystery of iniquity," as in opposition to the doctrine of Christ, called a mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16; so because antichrist's doctrine and way (however most fair and specious in pretext, yet) in reality and deed should be nothing else but error, untruth, impiety against God, Rev. xiii. 5, and unrighteousness against man, Rev. xiii. 17, for the word rendered "iniquity," doth express the general nature of sin, and as it were all sin whatsoever, 1 John iii. 4. Next, he sheweth how long the authority of the Roman emperors succeeding one another (called here "he who letteth") should prove a stop in the way of antichrist's growing greatness, even "until he be taken out of the way," that is, until their power be so broken, as that they should not be able any longer to withstand this arising spiritual dominion, and especially until

they should leave Rome, the seat of the empire, fully void and free, wherein the antichrist was to erect his throne, Rev. xvii. 9.

DOCTRINES.

1. So great an enemy is Satan to man's salvation, that no sooner did Christ erect a kingdom in the world for saving sinners, but as soon, at least within a little, the devil did counterwork, by endeavouring to erect an antichristian kingdom, thereby to render the kingdom of Christ, so far as in him lay, wholly useless: and therefore antiquity, so much boasted of by papists, is no undoubted mark of the true church, for antichristianism is but by few years of later standing than the kingdom of Christ under the gospel; "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work," saith he.

2. So subtle an enemy also is Satan, and so full of foresight, as that he hath many designs on foot at once, for effectuating his woful and malicious purpose, that so when one falleth by, and cometh useless, another may hold and carry on his work, so as the field be never fully empty: for though the Roman empire at this time was fully employed for carrying on the design of Satan in bearing down the kingdom of Christ, yet foreseeing, or at least fearing, that it would be taken out of the way, he begins in time to provide himself of the antichristian state, to carry on this woful work in their room: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."

3. So subtle an enemy also is Satan, as that, when his power and interest is not so great, as that he may safely work above ground, and carry on his work avowedly in open view of all, he contents himself to remain undiscovered, and rather to advance with a slow pace and undiscernibly, than by too much precipitancy to discover his design untimely, and consequently to expose it to crushing; for while the Roman empire was in strength and vigour, and so would have crushed that design of setting up an antichristian state in Rome, he wrought in a mystery, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work."

4. Satan and his instruments, especially heretical spirits, are not always idle, when they do not kyth, [appear,] but usually are most active in carrying on their woful work as they find access, when they appear least; for when antichristianism durst not kyth [appear] above board, yet it did work: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work."

5. The evil of error, especially of antichristian errors, and the height at which they aimed, neither doth, nor did kyth [appear] at first; and therefore it is no wonder, though men, otherwise gracious in the primitive times, who were kept busy in maintaining truth against other avowed errors of those times, did unawares, and through inadvertence, contribute somewhat to countenance the rising of that episcopal seat in some steps of its usurped dominion over the church of Christ, which, though improved moderately and for the terror of heretics at first, yet, in the ages following, after the removal of these reverend and gracious fathers, it did end in avowed antichristian tyranny; for antichristianism did for a long time "work in a mystery."

6. Greatest empires and worldly monarchies, which caused their terror in the land of the living, Ezek. xxxii. 23, 24, have their own fatal period, determined and foreknown by God, longer than which they cannot stand. The Lord giving hereby evident demonstration of his justice, while he visibly avengeth all those wrongs and insolences, which they by their power and terror have acted towards others, especially his church, and putting a difference betwixt all earthly powers, and the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ under the gospel, which shall never be destroyed, nor left unto other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and it shall be for ever, Dan. ii. 44; for he saith even the Roman empire "shall be taken out of the way."

7. When the time prefixed by God, for bringing about a work either of judgment or mercy, is fully come, all impediments and hinderances, even the greatest, though flourishing kingdoms and mighty empires, which formerly did let it, are easily and with little ado removed: for it is here foretold that when the due time of discovering the antichrist should come, "he who then did let," to wit, the Roman empire, "would be taken out of the way."

VER. 8. And then shall that Wicked be revealed,

The apostle doth now show the time when the antichrist should be revealed, or discover himself by exercising his open and avowed tyrannies over the church of Christ; to wit, "then," when he who did let should be taken out of the way, that is, as was before expounded, when the power of the Roman empire should be weakened and rendered wholly unable to resist the growing greatness of the antichrist. Neither is it necessary to condescend here upon a peremptory point of time, but as the one through a long tract of time should decrease, so the other should increase; and he calleth the antichrist here, "that wicked one," or (as it is in the original) that "lawless one," who should hold himself to be bound by no law, neither God's law, nor man's law, but above all law, so as he may dispense with law, and interpret law according to his pleasure.

DOCTRINES.

1. That the great antichrist here foretold is already come, and hath discovered himself by exercising his open and avowed tyranny, is clear from this, that the very point of time prefixed by God for his public appearing, is, the taking of that out of the way which formerly did let him, to wit, the Roman empire. Now sure it is, that though the name of an emperor and empire doth still remain, yet his imperial power and authority is fully removed in Asia, in Africa, yea, in Rome itself, the ancient seat of the empire, where he hath no command at all, but left it fully void for antichrist to erect his throne; neither hath he any thing left in Europe proper to him as Roman emperor, except the bare title and some ceremonies and compliments, with a little power and authority in Germany, but far below that which the Roman emperors of old enjoyed, and even

this little he cannot have but at the pope's pleasure, who must approve the emperor's election, otherwise it is null. Now it was not the name or shadow, but the power, majesty, and authority of the empire, and especially the emperor's interest in Rome, the ancient imperial seat, which did withhold the antichrist's rising greatness. And therefore that being removed, the only thing which impeded his revealing is taken away, and consequently, antichrist must be revealed already, and not yet to come as papists affirm: for saith he, "and then" (to wit when he who now letteth shall be taken out of the way, ver. 7,) "shall that wicked one be revealed."

VER. 8. Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Least the Lord's people had been above measure terrified by what remains of this dreadful prophecy, concerning antichrist's wonderful power and success, therefore the apostle, before he proceed further, doth in this fourth branch of the prophecy, for the comfort of the godly, foretell antichrist's destruction; whereof he mentioneth three degrees: first, the Lord Christ, who is the principal author of this destruction, "shall consume him," not in a moment, but, as the word signifieth, by little and little, piece and piece, weaken his respect and power in the church of God: and this "with the spirit," or breath, "of his mouth," or, the powerful preaching of the gospel by his sent ministers, Rev. xiv. 6, 7, who are as Christ's mouth, through whom he breatheth out the word of his everlasting gospel. (See the preaching of the gospel, called "the rod of his mouth, and breath of his lips," Isa. xi. 4.) Secondly, "he shall destroy him," that is, as the word signifieth, utterly abolish, enervate and make void, to wit, his power and respect, and that with "the brightness of his second coming;" for the word rendered, brightness, is usually joined with his coming to judgment; see Titus ii. 13, only because the last blow to be given to the antichrist's person seemeth to precede the last day, Rev. xix. 20, therefore we must look on this last step of his destruction as containing divers particular strokes in it, as first a stroke upon Rome the seat of the beast, Rev. xviii. 2; next, upon the person of the beast, or antichrist himself, Rev. xix. 20; after which it is like the antichristian kingdom will want a head. Thirdly, upon all the relics of antichristianism, and all who shall after that adhere to their errors and superstitions, of which sort it is probable there will be some even until the last day. And accordingly it is safest to conceive of Christ's second coming with some latitude, so as it may mean not only the very last day, but also the foregoing signs and evidences of its approaching, of which those glorious dispensations of his power in overturning the beast himself and his seat shall not be the least.

DOCTRINES.

1. So tender is God of his believing people, that, though he see it sometimes necessary to

acquaint them with such things as will put them to grief, yet he postponeth no time in hasting to them with a timely and seasonable comfort, when he seeth their hazard of fainting through excessive fear and discouragement calleth for it: for he breaks in upon the midst of this dreadful prophecy, with the comfortable tidings of antichrist's future destruction, "whom the Lord shall consume," saith he.

2. Our Lord's most glorious conquests and victories, in which most of himself is seen, are those which are obtained not so much by outward force, by might or by power, Zech. iv. 6, as by the plain and powerful preaching of his mighty word, which being the rod of his strength, Psa. cx. 2, he doth thereby bruise his enemies, and break them asunder; while he discovereth to open view their doings, errors, and deceits wherein their great strength doth lie, Heb. iv. 12, while he subdueth some of their followers unto himself, Acts ix. 1, &c. and doth vex and gall others as seeing their power and reputation daily weakened by such a contemptible mean, Rev. xvi. 10, 11, which nevertheless they cannot hinder: for our "Lord shall consume antichrist by the spirit of his mouth."

3. Whatever power or efficacy the word preached hath for bringing about the forementioned effects, it proceedeth not from any power or virtue in the word itself, Heb. iv. 2, or in them who do dispense it, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, but from the powerful influence of the Lord Christ, through whom alone the word preached is mighty to overthrow all strongholds and cast down vain imaginations, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, for he sheweth it is the "Lord Christ who shall consume antichrist by the spirit of his mouth."

4. The antichrist spoken of in Scripture, cannot be he which Papists present us with, to wit, one individual person, by nation a Jew, &c. who shall be killed at an instant, either immediately by Christ himself, or by an angel at his direction; for the antichrist shall not be destroyed at once, but by little and little, and first cast as it were into a bed of languishing, his total overthrow being to follow after; "Whom the Lord shall consume and destroy." (See the Exposition.)

5. Though the Lord might destroy his strongest enemies at an instant, Isa. xxxvii. 36, and when he begins also make an end, 1 Sam. iii. 12, yet his usual way is to advance toward their total ruin by certain degrees and steps; that somewhat of his glory may be seen in every step, Psa. lix. 11, that such of them as are appointed for mercy, may in the mean time be drawn to repentance, Rom. ii. 4, and others rendered inexcusable, Rom. ii. 5, and that his people may be kept in exercise betwixt hopes and fears, thanksgiving for what is already done, Psa. lvi. 12, 13, earnest prayer and dependence upon God for completing of what doth yet remain, Psa. lvi. 13; for it is here foretold that this shall be his way with the antichrist, "whom the Lord shall consume," by little and little, as the word signifies.

6. As there are but small grounds of hope from Scripture, that the word preached shall convert the antichrist, or work a reformation among his devoted followers, it shall "consume" him, but not convert him; so where the word

preached in life and power doth not prevail to the conversion of those who hear it now, it is an undoubted forerunner of eternal destruction to be inflicted upon them by Christ the Lord, when he shall come in glory to judge the world hereafter; for because the spirit of Christ's mouth doth only consume and not convert the antichrist, therefore shall "Christ destroy him with the brightness of his coming."

7. As the seeds of antichristianism were early sown in the church, (see ver. 7, Doct. 1.) so they are to continue long, even until Christ's second coming to judge the world; and therefore the church is not to dream of having any time fully free from trouble of all sorts until then, neither is that perpetuity and long continuance of doctrine, publicly professed through many succeeding ages, whereof the Papists boast, an infallible mark of a true church; for somewhat of antichrist and antichristianism will be in the world so long as it lasts. "Whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

VER. 9. *Even him* whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders,

The apostle in the first branch of this prophecy, returns to speak more fully of antichrist's "coming," whereby is meant not only his first advancement and raising to his power, but the tract of his government in defending, ruling, and enlarging of his kingdom, which is described from his auxiliary forces, helps, or means, by the assistance whereof he should procure to himself a general respect and esteem in the Christian world; and those are three, whereof two are in this verse, first, "the working," or, as the word signifieth, the utmost efficacy and most powerful operation of Satan, who should employ the height of his great power, piercing knowledge, malicious wit, indefatigable diligence, and marvellous activity for supporting and enlarging of antichrist's kingdom. The second help is "all power and signs," &c. or power of signs, by an usual flower of speech expressing one thing by two words, and the meaning is that Satan should assist him, and his officers under him, with a power and faculty of working signs and wonders for confirmation of his tyranny and false doctrine, Rev. xiii. 13, 14, and first he calls this power "all power," not as if either Satan or antichrist were omnipotent, or had power to do what they please, Job i. 12, Acts iv. 28; but it is all "created" power, or the utmost of what created skill and understanding can reach. 2. He calls them "lying wonders," or, as it is the original, "wonders of lies" or falsehood, which agreeth both to signs and wonders, as indeed they are usually taken for one and the same thing in different respects, Rom. xv. 19, Mark xiii. 22; and they are false and lying, because some of them were to be but counterfeit and feigned, mere jugglings, deceiving the outward senses, and others of them, (though truly done and breeding marvel and astonishment in beholders, who know not the manner and way how they are done, yet) should not be true miracles as being only effects of some secret natural

causes, for only God can produce true miracles, or works exceeding the reach of all natural causes, Psal. lxxii. 18, lxxvii. 13, Rom. iv. 17. And lastly, all of them should be wrought by Satan, and his instruments, to confirm false and lying doctrines, and therefore are justly called "lying wonders."

DOCTRINES.

1. Though Satan's power is not illimited, Job ii. 6, neither can he infallibly determine the wills of men to follow his suggestions, Job i. 12, with 22, yet as he hath no small power upon this sublunary world, (see upon Eph. ii. 2, Doct. 8,) yea and great influence upon men's actions by presenting them with such temptations as are most agreeable unto their temper, 2 Sam. xi. 2, and importuning them incessantly with inward suggestions and representations unto their fancy of such things as may most conduce for his purpose, Prov. iv. 16; so, such is his enmity to Christ's kingdom, and malice to man's salvation, that he exerciseth the utmost of all his power can reach to bear down the one and impede the other: and therefore it is no wonder to see some of those who are engaged under him in that woful work, somewhat elevated above the sphere of ordinary activity, skill, and diligence; for he shows that Satan's working or utmost activity, shall be employed against Christ for promoting antichrist's kingdom. "Whose coming is after the working of Satan."

2. It is a piece of necessary wisdom in the Lord's people, in forecasting trials, not to extenuate what hazard is in them, but to look upon them as they are clothed with all their terrifying circumstances, whereby they may prepare for the uttermost before it come, Job iii. 25, 26: for the Spirit of God seeth it necessary to present this trial under antichrist to the church in its full terror. "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power," &c.

3. Satan doth set himself, in furthering the condemnation of sinners, to imitate Christ in many of those things which are done by him in bringing about the salvation of the elect; as Christ erects a kingdom in the world whereof himself is head, Psal. ii. 6; so Satan hath his kingdom in opposition to Christ's, whereof antichrist is the visible head, Rev. xiii. 11, 12. As Christ doth impart the influences of his Spirit unto his servants, whereby they work effectually in those who are saved, Col. i. 29; so Satan to the utmost of his power doth act his instruments, whereby through God's permission they work effectually in those who perish, Rev. xviii. 13, 14. As Christ did confirm his doctrine by miracles, and exercise his power in his servants in working miracles mediately by them for that end, Heb. ii. 3, 4; so doth Satan confirm his erroneous doctrine in antichrist's kingdom, by working signs and wonders, and sometimes lendeth his power to antichrist and his vassals to work the like: for he shows that Satan doth help antichrist to and in his kingdom "by his effectual working," and by a "power of signs and wonders."

4. However Satan set himself to imitate Christ thus, for blinding the eyes of men, and making

them believe that his kingdom, ministers, and doctrines and miracles do differ nothing from Christ's, yet he comes not so far up to his copy but the Lord's people, who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, may find a difference betwixt what is Satan's and what is Christ's, for his wonders are, and will be found to "be but lying wonders."

VER. 10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

In this verse he, first, expresseth the third mean and help which antichrist was to make use of for heightening his respect and credit in the Christian world, "all deceivableness of unrighteousness," where by "unrighteousness," it seemeth, must be mainly meant his unrighteous false doctrine, because, ver. 12, it is opposed to "truth," as also, 1 Cor. xiii. 6, and it is so called, because it should tend to make the receivers of it injurious to God, unjust to men, and cruel to themselves. And "by deceivableness" is meant all manner of deceits, tricks, strong, and cunning persuasions, which he should make use of to make the world believe his unrighteous errors to be pure and innocent truths, such as sophistical disputations, Col. ii. 8, pretexts to piety and devotion, Matt. xxiii. 14, baits of riches, pleasures and preferments, 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19, boasts and threatenings, Rev. xiii. 17, and such like. Next, he enters the sixth branch of this prophecy, wherein he speaketh to the antichrist's great success by the former means and helps; and for the comfort of the godly he astrieth this success unto a certain kind of men, who should be his subjects and sworn vassals. And those he describeth, first, from their everlasting state, "they shall perish" eternally, to wit, they, who should join with him in all his errors, even those who strike most at the foundation, and persist in them obstinately and finally without repentance, Rev. xiii. 18, and xviii. 4, which holds especially in them who would adhere to him after that the Lord should discover his damnable doctrines and tyranny by the light of the gospel, Rev. xiv. 6—9, &c. Next from the cause of their destruction, to wit, when all of them should have an offer of saving truth, some in one measure, some in another, yet through want of "love" to it they would "not receive it;" that is, they would reject it, for more is intended than is expressed by this word; whence he hints at the conclusion which he intends to prove, to wit, that they could not be saved, but behaved to perish, while he sheweth that receiving of the truth in love is a necessary antecedent of salvation.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the nature and way of such as are ringleaders of errors, to find out and prosecute all possible means and ways, which may in any measure tend to make their tenets plausible, and pass for truths; that what is wanting to their errors in the point of divine authority, and sanctified reason, may be supplied, by their pretences

to piety, antiquity, by their gratifying of men's lusts, sophistical disputations, passionate persuasions, and all such other devices, which serve to blind the eyes even of the wise, that they cannot so well discern betwixt the truth and falsehood of what they hear; for it is here foretold that antichrist should come "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness," or all manner of deceits, to persuade the receiving of his unrighteous doctrine.

2. Ringleaders of error are usually men of little conscience, in so far as they stand not much upon the nature and kind of the means they use, whether they be right or wrong, if so they can serve their present design: for antichrist doth use "all deceivableness of unrighteousness."

3. So tender is God of his people's comfort, that, for the most part, those scriptures which terrify most are so contrived as to carry with them an antidote of comfort against hopeless discouragement in their bosom: for this terrifying scripture, which speaks of antichrist's future success, hath in it a comfort, to wit, that his power and success is limited only to reprobates, even "them that perish."

4. Though even the godly elect may be seduced to error for a time, Phil. iii. 15, yet they cannot arrive at such a height of malicious blindness, as against all means of their reclaiming to remain obstinate in the bulk and most fundamental of antichristian errors, and to persist in their obstinacy unto death: for it is here foretold he should so prevail only "in those who perish."

5. When foulest and most dangerous errors are carried on with fair pretexts, subtle insinuations, pithy persuasions, they will not want a multitude of blind followers; for antichristian untruths being carried on by "all deceivableness," are received generally by those "who perish."

6. Though the Lord hath no regard to the future sin of reprobates, as the cause of their reprobation, Rom. ix. 11, 12, yet he actually condemneth none of those, no, not the antichrist's most active followers, whose sin is not the cause of their condemnation; and therefore none shall have reason to complain that they do perish unjustly and without a cause; for the cause why they perish is here expressed, "because they received not the love of the truth."

7. Among all the sins of a people professing Christ, which deserve condemnation, and for which reprobates shall actually be condemned, the contempt of the gospel is the first and chief. It is a sin against the remedy of sin, and which provoketh the Lord, in his holy justice, to give up the person guilty to the power and slavery of several other sins; so that uncleannesses, murders, perjuries, &c., are but streams flowing from this woful fountain; for he mentioneth none of their other sins as the cause of their destruction, but this alone. "Because they received not the love of the truth," saith he.

8. If even the least report of gospel truths and of Christ be not received and made welcome, it is a sin sufficient to provoke the Lord to plague the person guilty in such a manner as he shall never recover, but undoubtedly perish; and therefore how much more when Christ and the gospel

is fully and plainly taught, and yet the gracious offers of mercy therein contained are abused and slighted? For it is but a small and passing report of truth and Christ, which many of antichrist's followers do hear, being compared with what we now enjoy, and yet they perish "because they received not the truth in love."

9. It is not sufficient to receive the truth, because the politic laws of the land enjoin so much, or upon any other account, but from love to it; otherwise Satan, antichrist, or some suitable temptation from any other art, will easily prevail to make him who hath so received it slip from it; for they "perish," and are given over to antichrist's delusions, as appears from ver. 11, "because they received not the love of the truth."

10. There is no middle betwixt heaven and hell, salvation and condemnation; if a man attain not the former, he cannot by any means escape the latter, and if he do not walk in the way to heaven, he doth *ipso facto*, and without any further, post swiftly forward to hell and condemnation; for he proves they could not but perish and be condemned, because they refused to walk in the way wherein they might be saved, even "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

VER. 11. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

He doth here further describe the vassals of antichrist's kingdom, thirdly, from a higher degree of their sin. They would not only reject truth, but also "believe a lie," that is, give a firm assent, without any contrary doubt, to grossest untruths and errors as to the very truths of God. Which their sin is set forth from a necessary antecedent of it, the Lord's sending them strong delusion; "for this cause," to wit, for their not receiving the love of the truth spoken of, ver. 10; where by "strong delusion," or (as the word doth signify) efficacy of error and seduction, is not meant error itself, but the prevalency and pith of error, so that when temptations to error should be propounded by Satan and his emissaries, they would undoubtedly prevail; and this efficacy of error is attributed to God's sending, not as if the Lord did incite or persuade men to believe errors, for he forbids and condemns them, 2 Pet. iii. 17, but because he not only giveth loose reins unto Satan to use his power of seduction against them, 1 Kings xxii. 22, but also raineth snares upon them, and actively bringeth about many things in his providence, which being in themselves good, are yet stumbled on by them in their corruption, so as they are thereby furthered to close with the temptation, Job xxi. 7, &c., with 14, withhold his grace whereby they might resist temptations, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; yea, and actually in his judgment withdraws, and after a sort extinguisheth that strength and light which he had formerly given, and they abused, Matt. xxv. 29, so that they cannot but succumb when they are tempted.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not inconsistent with the Lord's holi-

ness, but most agreeable to his unspotted justice, to punish sin with sin, by giving the sinner up, in the way mentioned in the Exposition, to the slavery and tyranny of that sin wherein he so much delights; for he saith, "for this cause," to wit, for their former sin, "God shall send them strong delusion."

2. As one degree of sin maketh way for a higher, so there cannot be a more terrible judgment inflicted upon any for former sin, than that he be given up of God to the power of it in time to come; a judgment so much the more dreadful, as the party smitten by it is not sensible of it, Exod. vii. 22, 23; for this is the terrible judgment here denounced, "for this cause God shall send them strong delusion."

3. That an error, when it is vented, becometh mightily prevalent, in making many to close with it and embrace it, proceedeth not from the power of Satan's temptations only, who hath not of himself an irresistible influence upon the minds of men, Job i. 12, with 22, but also and mainly from men's own corruption and blindness, and the Lord's judicial up-giving of them to it formerly mentioned, which holdeth by parity of reason in Satan's temptations to any other sin; for the efficacy of error is here spoken of as a judgment sent by God: "God shall send them strong delusion."

4. Where gospel truths are not received in love and made use of as they ought, absurd and monstrous errors will be ere long received, and believed for truths; for because they received not the love of the truth, they are given up of God "to believe a lie."

5. When the Lord, in his holy justice, giveth loose reins unto Satan to tempt a sinner, and withdraweth from him his restraining grace, there is no sin so irrational or absurd to which the man so plagued of God will not run, if it were even to receive most gross absurdities for divine truths, and to believe them with a kind of firm assent beyond all doubt or suspicion; for their believing lies is here foretold as the consequence of God's sending "them strong delusion," even that "they should believe a lie."

VER. 12. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

He describeth the antichrist's followers, fourthly, from that judgment which followeth upon their sin, and is intended to be brought about by God as the end of his sending them strong delusion; for the context, showing the result of this purpose from the former, implieth so much; and the judgment is, "they shall all be damned," to wit, all guilty in the way mentioned upon ver. 10, of the former sins; which for further clearing of God's justice, he doth here again repeat, first, that which is spoken of ver. 10, "their not believing the truth," after they had heard it, to wit, the truth of the gospel, (see the gospel so called, and for what reasons upon Eph. i. 13, Doct. 4.) Next, that which is expressed ver. 11, here called "their taking pleasure in unrighteousness," that is, false and unrighteous doctrine

(see upon ver. 10), to which they did not only give their assent and approbation, but also did find much inward satisfaction, and had an inexpressible delight and pleasure in it (as the word signifieth), and in all the woful consequences of unrighteousness both to God and man, to which it tended; and therefore they should be without excuse, and dying impenitent, be damned without remedy.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though some sins and errors be a necessary result of God's judicial giving up a man to the power of temptation and delusion, as said is, yet they cease not to be sin, obliging the guilty party to undergo eternal wrath, no less than any other sin; and that because their former sins have justly procured that they should be so given up of God: and though God in his justice doth punish sin with sin, yet the sinner doth always delight in sin, as being the matter of his voluntary choice. For he shows they shall be damned for believing a lie, though the Lord being provoked, as said is, by their former sins, had sent them strong delusion, and that "because they took pleasure in unrighteousness. That they all might be damned," saith he.

2. It is a manifest untruth that every man shall be saved in his own religion, and that it is no hazard for a man to be of any religion, if so he follow his conscience, believing what he thinks to be truth, and walk according to the principles of that religion which he professeth and believeth to be of God; for here it is foretold that the devout followers of antichristian lies, though they did believe them to be truths, yet should be damned. "That they all might be damned."

3. Multitudes of sinners concurring in one and the same guilt, doth neither lessen the guilt, nor make God either through fear abate, or from pity moderate, the deserved punishment; for here it is foretold that "they shall all be damned."

4. That a man do savingly believe the gospel, it is not sufficient that he assent to the truth of it in his judgment, but he must also embrace and receive the good things offered by it in his will and affections, and that from love to it; for that which he called the receiving of truth in love, ver. 10, he calleth believing the truth here. "Who believed not the truth."

5. As no men, no, not the worst of men, become extremely evil at first, but by certain steps ascend toward that height of sin at which they do at last arrive, so when a man doth not only commit sin, but takes pleasure in it, maketh his boast of it, it speaks him at the very height of sin, and near a dreadful downfall in the pit of condemnation, if God's mercy, by giving speedy repentance, prevent it not; for several steps are here implied, their not "receiving truth," their "believing untruth," and the height of all, and nearest cause of their being damned, is "their taking pleasure in unrighteousness."

6. A man deluded with error may for a time find much seeming peace of conscience, quietness of spirit, soul satisfaction and delight, flowing from those erroneous doctrines which he believeth for truth; and the more of this kind a man doth find in the way of error, he is the

more deluded, and his guilt the greater; for their "taking pleasure in unrighteousness," or in unrighteous doctrine, is spoken of as the utmost effect of that strong delusion sent them, ver. 11, and the highest step of their sin.

A NECESSARY APPENDIX,

CONTAINING THE APPLICATION OF THIS PROPHECY, AND DISCOVERING WHO THIS ANTICHRIST IS.

HAVING thus explained this dark prophecy, and made such doctrinal application of it as every verse apart did offer, it now remaineth, that for the more full understanding of the present Scripture, a discovery be made, Who is this man of sin, that great Antichrist, whom the Spirit of God doth here so fully describe; which the event, time, and experience, the surest commentaries for understanding dark prophecies, have now made so fully clear, that those who have eyes may see the truth of that assertion which hath been maintained almost in every age, and now by all the reformed divines? Whereby it is affirmed, that the Pope of Rome, ever since he usurped that fulness of power in all causes both human and divine, which he hath now for a long time enjoyed, hath been, and yet is, that man of sin, that child of perdition, the very antichrist here described; and that because all the characters of this man of sin, and every passage of this prophecy, is verified in the pope, as shall be made appear by taking a review of every verse.

And, I. The third verse is verified in him; for, first, the church of Rome, whereof the pope is head, hath made defection from the doctrine of faith, and purity of worship held forth in the gospel, as appears from all the controverted points betwixt us and them; which apostasy did spread itself over the face of the whole visible church, even as the apostasy here foretold to be under the antichrist: "Except there come a falling away." 2. The pope did not pretend to such power over the church of Christ, as he now exerciseth, in Paul's time. Their own historians grant he claimed not the title of universal bishop, nor power of both swords, and supreme authority over general councils, until some centuries of years were past. Even as the antichrist of whom it is here foretold, he had not then revealed himself by exercising open tyranny over the church of Christ: "And that man of sin be revealed," saith he. 3. The pope is a "man," though not an individual person without succession, yet *de jure* always, but "one" at one and the same time, and a continued series and succession of men in one and the same chair, driving forward one and the same design, even in that sense wherein I proved in the Exposition, that the antichrist is here called a man in the singular number. 4. The pope is "a man of sin;" first, in his own person. It is almost incredible what monsters of men, for horrible crimes of murder, adultery, simony, sorcery, incest, sodomy, even popish historians do relate many of their own popes to have been. 2ndly,

in causing others to sin, in so far as he not only persuadeth and forceth men to idolatry and superstition, under the name of commanded worship, as Jeroboam did, but also for money dispenseth, in some cases, with murder, fornication, incest, and selleth pardons for any sin, unto those who have sufficient money wherewith to buy them. This is not denied by themselves, even as the antichrist who is here called the "man of sin." 5. The pope is the "son of perdition." First, One who is destinate to destruction himself, as the godless life and monstrous sins of many popes have declared them to be, whatever the Lord may do in mercy to some, and those but very few particular popes, whose lives have not been so grossly vicious as the rest, if so he have given them repentance for their abominable errors. 2ndly, One who destroyeth others both in their souls by damnable doctrines, idolatries, and superstitions, and in their bodies in so far as his cruel persecutions upon men and women for conscience, have for length of time multitudes of those who have suffered by him, and the cruel manner of his persecuting by exquisite tortures, bloody massacres, surpassed far all other persecutions that ever were: even as the antichrist, who is here called, in those same respects, "the son of perdition."

II. Whatever is affirmed of the antichrist, ver. 4, is verified in the pope; for, first, under pretence and colour of friendship, he is an eminent opposite and adversary to Christ, as in many other things, so chiefly in his threefold office. 1. In his kingly office, while he destroyeth his subjects, dispenseth with his laws, maketh them of none effect by his traditions, enacteth laws of his own, to bind the conscience, of equal authority, yea, and some of them point blank opposite unto the laws of Christ, as in his forbidding marriage to churchmen, discharging the use of the cup at the Lord's supper. 2. In his priestly office, while he maketh himself a high priest under the New Testament, denieth the fullness of Christ's satisfaction and intercession, alleging that they must be supplied by the merits and intercession of the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels, and teaching people to give them religious worship for that end. 3. In his prophetic office, while he teacheth that the Scriptures are imperfect; and as a false prophet doth teach contrary to what was taught by Christ, in the doctrine of merit, purgatory, indulgences, work of supererogation, &c., so that he opposeth Christ in all his offices, and this for a greater length of time, with more universal success and more formidable force than ever any heretic did before him; even as the antichrist, who is here said "to oppose himself." Secondly, The pope exalts himself above all kings and emperors, while he teacheth he hath absolute power to dispose of kingdoms and empires to whom he will, at least in order to the church's good, and actually hath dethroned kings and other magistrates, absolving their subjects from their oath of allegiance; doth make the emperor to hold his stirrup when he is to ride, and will have him to count it a favour to have access to kiss his feet, yea, and sometimes hath trampled upon the emperor's neck, being humbly prostrate before him to beg his favour

and reconciliation with him; all which are avowed and granted; even as the antichrist, of whom it is here said, "he exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped." (See the Exposition.) Thirdly, The pope, in managing his rule and government over the church of God, pretendeth to no less than divine authority, even the same with God and Christ, whose great vicegerent and vicar-general on earth he giveth out himself to be. Besides, it is expressly affirmed by popish writers, that the pope, sitting in and teaching from his chair, cannot err, and his determinations are of equal certainty with the doctrine of Christ himself; even as the antichrist, of whom it is here said, that he shall carry himself "as God." Fourthly, The pope doth sit and exercise an absolute, fixed, and unlimited power of government over a society of men which once were God's spiritual temple and church, and do yet bear that name, and are so in effect, if we speak of that small remnant which in all ages the Lord made to keep their garments clean from soul-ruining antichristian errors, or if we speak of the whole bulk and body of them, not absolutely, but as being compared with Turks, Jews, and heathens, in so far as they still retain some relics of a church, as the written word, sacraments, ordination, &c., though miserably corrupted by false glosses, a number of superstitions, idolatrous, and antichristian additions; in which respects the church and see of Rome may be called the temple and church of God, wherein the pope doth sit and rule; even as it is here foretold of antichrist, that he should "sit in the temple of God." Fifthly, The pope attempts to show that he is nothing less to be esteemed of than God, by taking and suffering to be ascribed unto himself, 1. Divine titles, as, "our Lord God the Pope, universal Pastor, chief High-priest, Head of the catholic church." 2. Divine worship, as prostration to him, adoration of him, upon opinion of some transcendent sanctity in him, and that he hath fullness of power to forgive sins, bestow heaven, and damn to hell. 3. Divine properties; as that he cannot err, is the judge of all men, and himself can be judged by no man, hath power, as Christ's vicar, to dispense with all law, can forgive not only sins past, but for a lease of years to come; even as the antichrist, of whom it is here foretold, he should "show himself that he is God."

III. Whatever is affirmed of the antichrist, ver. 6, 7, is verified also in the pope; for, first, It was the pope's power, the growth whereof in Rome and Christendom was hindered by the Roman empire, and which was advanced by little and little towards its full height, as the credit, power, and authority of that empire did weaken and decay; the truth whereof is abundantly confirmed by history, and acknowledged by papists themselves; even as it is here foretold, that the credit and authority of the Roman empire did for a long time retard the antichrist's growing greatness, and that the antichrist's power should rise upon the ruins of that empire: "Ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed," and "he will let until he be taken out of the way." (See the Exposition.) Secondly, A great many of popish errors were already hatched in the apostle's

time, as that men are not justified by faith only, but also by works, Gal. ii. 16; that we must commend ourselves to God by the ministry of angels, and for that end give them religious worship, Col. ii. 18; that we must abstain from certain kinds of meat, Col. ii. 21, and churchmen from marriage; that we ought to subject ourselves to the wills of men in the use of things indifferent, Col. ii. 20; and that superiority of power in one churchman over the rest is a thing convenient and desirable, 3 John 9, which, and such like popish errors, did then work secretly and underground towards that height of credit and authority which they afterwards attained. Even as it is here shown that the "mystery" of antichristian tyranny and doctrine did "work already" in "Paul's" time. Thirdly, popish errors, though most gross in themselves, yet are covered over with such fair pretences, that hardly can the poison which lurketh in them be at first discerned; unity is pleaded for, as the foundation of their hierarchy; a pretext is made of humility, for pressing the invocation of saints and angels, and of sending our suits by their mediation to God. Their doctrine of merit and justification by works, and not by faith only, is pressed as the only mean of exciting to diligence in duty, and especially in the works of charity. They press pilgrimages, penances, abstinence from meats, voluntary poverty, vows to lead a single life, under the plausible pretences of attaining thereby to more than ordinary sanctity, mortification of the flesh, and such like; even as the antichristian doctrine and tyranny is here called a mystery: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." (See the Exposition.) And, Fourthly, Whatever popish doctrine, as it is popish, pretend to of more than ordinary sanctity, yet the native issue and result of all in those who do receive it, is nothing else but impiety and iniquity. Their vows of voluntary poverty do, in the nature of the thing, drive them to idleness, beggary, and to live upon the labours of others: vows of leading a single life are accompanied with fornications, adulteries, and all manner of uncleanness in those who have not the gift of continency. Their vows of blind and absolute obedience to their superiors do drive them to murder kings, and perpetrate other most desperate villanies, and to think they merit heaven by so doing, if their superiors do enjoin them. Their strict penances, pilgrimages, and fastings from certain meats on certain days; their auricular confessions; do cast them loose to live at random in other things, as thinking they have already made satisfaction to God by those things, and knowing how to make up with a little pains whatever yet is lacking, even as the antichristian doctrine is here called "a mystery of iniquity."

IV. Whatever is affirmed of the antichrist, ver. 8, is also verified in the pope; for, first, it is maintained by his flattering followers, that he is above law, taketh law from none, and giveth law unto all; that he may dispense with God's law, of wrong make right by correcting and changing the law, even as the antichrist, who is here said to be that "wicked," or lawless one.

2. The pope, after long wrestling in the dark,

hath at last, after some hundreds of years since, attained to an incredible height of power in the whole Christian world, by his being possessed with the power of both swords, but chiefly in the city and territories of Rome, where he is absolute lord and master, ever since the Roman empire did lose all interest in Europe, as history doth make clear; even as the antichrist is said here to be revealed immediately after the weakening of the Roman empire: "And then shall that wicked one be revealed." To which add, that seeing the antichrist must be already come, as I proved in Doct. 1 from this verse, what power is there, or hath been, to whom all his characters here and elsewhere mentioned, do agree so well as to the pope? 3. Since the first beginning of reformation from popery, the power and credit of the pope hath been much wasted, and by little and little consumed by the powerful preaching of the gospel, through which his errors, tyranny, superstitions, and idolatry, have been discovered to the world, and openly disavowed by the reformed churches; even as it is here foretold, "that the Lord shall consume antichrist by the breath of his mouth." 4. However the power and credit of the pope, and of his erroneous doctrine, be much weakened, yet so many and strong are those engines which he employeth to defend his tottering kingdom, and so small ground hath been gained upon him these sixty years last past, that there is little appearance he shall meet with a full and final overthrow in haste, or before the time of Christ's second coming; even as it is here foretold, there will be somewhat of antichrist in the world until then, "which Christ shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Lastly, whatever is affirmed of antichrist, ver. 9—12, is also verified in the pope; for, first, histories do testify a great many popes have come to the popedom by sorcery, and express covenanting with the devil for that end, by simony, by poisoning their predecessors, or others who stood in their way, and by such other devilish arts, wherein, as in several other things, besides those, Satan hath been extremely active to advance popes and popery; even as it is here affirmed of antichrist, "whose coming is after the working of Satan." Secondly, a singular mean and help by which the pope, and popish doctrine, have come to credit and respect in the Christian world, is, signs and wonders alleged to be wrought by him and his followers; this being their usual way, when other proofs do fail, to fly to miracles to confirm their superstitions and idolatries, so that there is scarcely any famous church, image, or statue, or founder of any new religious order, or any monastery or religious place which is not famous by some one or other miracle, and some of them for many reported to be done by them, and in them, yea, they make the glory of working miracles a mark of the true church; even as it is here foretold of antichrist, that his "coming," credit, and advancement, should be "with all power, signs, and wonders." Thirdly, popish miracles are all but false and lying wonders, given out and supposed only to be such, in so far as, 1. Some of them are but mere jugglings, and found to be such, as when

they affirm their images to have spoken, issued drops of blood and sweat; that poor souls have come creeping and crying out of purgatory, bemoaning their case, which have either been effectuated immediately by Satan, or by subtle conveyance and sleight of hand, which hath sometimes been discovered, and the spirit taken, whipped, and laid in the stocks, for his imposture. 2. Some of them have been truly done, but not true miracles, as not exceeding the power of all natural causes, as when they affirm that some diseases have been cured by the touch of their superstitious relics; now, how easy is it for Satan to take off and cure a disease, which, through God's permission, he hath laid on; especially seeing many such like seemingly miraculous cures have been effectuated by devilish art among the heathens. And, 3. All of them are made use of to confirm their erroneous doctrines and superstitious practices, as their worshipping of relics, prayer for the dead, invocation of saints, purgatory, &c., and consequently all of them but false and seeming miracles; even as it is here foretold of antichrist, that "his coming should be with signs and lying wonders." Fourthly, the popish doctrine, wherein it differs from the doctrine of the reformed churches, is nothing but a heap of untruths, driving the maintainers of it to impiety against God, in idolatry, superstition, breach of vows, and perjuries; and to unrighteousness against man, in unnaturality, disobedience to parents and lawful superiors, under religious pretexts, in preferring fornication and uncleanness to the bed undefiled in marriage, in justifying jesuitical equivocations, and speaking, yea, and swearing untruths, and such like, which hath been abundantly made out by the reformed divines in their writings to that purpose: even as the doctrine of the antichrist is here called "unrighteousness," or a doctrine of untruths tending to unrighteousness and sin of all sorts. Fifthly, the pope doth not avow or profess himself an enemy to truth and Christian religion, but rather the prime pillar of it, even Christ's vicar on earth, the servant of the servants of Christ, by which and such like specious pretexts he hath undermined truth, and established error in its place; even as it is here foretold of the antichrist, that he should not openly avow his doctrine to be contrary to gospel truth, but labour by deceitful tricks and fair pretexts to make the world believe his doctrine to be truth, "even by all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Sixthly, innumerable almost are those subtle devices and deceiving jugglings, which are made use of under papacy to persuade the world to embrace their erroneous and unrighteous doctrine, such as, strong and false allegations of their unity among themselves under one head, of the antiquity of their doctrine, the consent of the fathers to it, the universality of it, which is no more in effect but that all the world did once wonder after the beast, Rev. xiii. 3; besides that their doctrine and worship is so framed, as to comply with men's corrupt lusts, and to fit every humour. If men be lazy idlers, they place them in monasteries; if ambitious or covetous, there are places of preferment and profit to catch them; if vo-

luptuous and licentious, they may for a little money have pardons and dispensations; if quiet, and cannot endure the world's trouble, there is a solitary life in some hermitage prepared for them; if a man dislike his wife, let him enter religious orders, and he is delivered from her; if of a pragmatic stirring disposition, there are employments of compassing sea and land, to gain a proselyte, waiting for him. There are flatteries and taking allurements for men of spirit, who will not be boasted; and boasts, and threats of curses and excommunications, for men of a more folding temper: in a word, whatever a man's humour can fancy, there is somewhat in popery to satisfy it, and make men believe of themselves that they are singularly devout, when they do but feed their carnal humours; even as it is here foretold of the antichrist, that he should come not with some, but "all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Seventhly, though the power of the pope, for many ages, was most dreadful and absolute through all Europe, yet it was not unlimited; there being always some in every age (as papists themselves do sometimes confess, and history maketh clear) who never yielded to take on his yoke, but one way or other testified against his tyrannical usurpation, and damnable soul-destroying doctrine: even as it is here foretold that some should be exempted from the antichrist's defection, for he was only to prevail in "those who perish." Eighthly, the members of the popish church had in all ages the truth of the gospel tendered to them, at the first beginning of the pope's apostasy and open tyranny more clearly, in following ages more darkly, what, by somewhat they heard of Christ's nativity, passion, resurrection, &c., expounded to them, according to the custom, at their great festivals, and what by the testimony, or report of that testimony, which dying martyrs or other confessors gave to truth, whereof there were some almost in every age; and yet they did not receive or believe the truth, especially those truths relating to the authority, sufficiency, and perfection of Scripture, to the fulness of Christ's satisfaction and merit, and the complete discharging of all his offices, the justification of sinners by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by faith alone, and such other truths controverted betwixt them and us: yea, neither believe they any truth because of the authority of God revealing it in Scripture, but because of the pope's authority, which only makes Scripture to be Scripture, and worthy of credit unto them, and therefore cannot be said to believe any truth at all, seeing their faith is only human, grounded upon the authority of man; even as it is here foretold of antichrist's followers, that "they received not the truth in love," when it was offered to them, and that "they believed not the truth." Ninthly, hugely gross errors and superstitious fooleries are maintained by the pope and his followers, for necessary truths and acceptable pieces of divine worship, as may be seen in their apish toys, foolish gestures used at mass, in their doctrine of transubstantiation and indulgences; and such is their incorrigible obstinacy in these, against clear evidence of Scripture, yea, and of common sense and reason, that it cannot be conceived rational

men would be so infatuated and stupid, except they were judicially plagued of God, by giving them over to the power and prevalence of error and delusion, even as it is here affirmed of antichrist's followers, "that God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Tenthly, as popish doctrine, wherein it differeth from us, is but a bundle of lies, which is abundantly proved by the reformed divines, so this doctrine of lies is believed by the generality of the popish church as the very truth of God, with a firm assent, and without all contrary doubt; so that some of them, being given over to the power of delusion, will choose to die for it, at least to suffer loss of goods, before they recede from it: even as it is here foretold of antichrist's followers, that "God shall send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Eleventhly, many of the pope's deluded followers have their consciences so seared, that they rest their souls upon the faith of popish errors, draw a kind of comfort and satisfaction from them, and have an infinite delight in the most fond and foolish of all their superstitious performances, as thinking they thereby do God good service: even as it is here foretold of antichrist's followers, that "they should have pleasure in unrighteousness," or erroneous and unrighteous doctrine.

And now, to shut up this second part of the chapter, I may confidently resume the former assertion, as a clear conclusion from what is already said, that seeing all the characters of the man of sin, here described, are verified in the pope of Rome, ever since he usurped the fulness of power in all causes, both human and divine, which he hath now for a long time exercised, therefore he hath been, and yet is, that "man of sin," that "child of perdition," and the very antichrist who is here described.

VER. 13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

The apostle, in the third part of the chapter, doth comfort and confirm those believing Thessalonians, and in them all sincere believers, through all ages, against the terror of the forementioned dreadful prophecy; and this three ways. The first, (which is propounded by way of thanksgiving to God, see chap. i. 3,) is the certainty of their salvation, grounded upon God's decree of their election, whereby he had "chosen them" (passing by others, as the word implieth) to the enjoying of salvation, or perfect blessedness in heaven, 1 Pet. i. 2—4, which decree of election is described from several things, which do all of them conduce to their confirmation and establishment. 1. From the cause moving God to it, implied in the word "beloved," it was nothing without himself, (see upon Eph. i. 4, Doct. 7.) but his love to them, which made him choose them. 2. From its antiquity: it was "from the

beginning," or, from eternity, as he explains himself, Eph. i. 4. 3. From the means "through" which it is brought to execution, first, "sanctification" wrought in them by the "Spirit" of God, mentioned before faith, (though it be a fruit of faith, Acts xv. 9,) because it doth first appear to us, James ii. 18, (see what this sanctification is, upon 1 Thess. iv. 3). Secondly, "belief" and faith, (see what this grace is, 1 Thess. i. 3,) called "belief of the truth," because it hath respect unto, and relieth upon the truth, chiefly of the gospel, Mark i. 15, in which Christ is offered, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the truly godly, beloved of God, do most suspect their own strength, and are most afraid of their own weakness, upon hearing of approaching trials, when the unrenewed fool rageth and is confident, Prov. xiv. 16; so it is the duty of Christ's ministers to provide the Lord's people with suitable and seasonable grounds of consolation from the Word of truth, to underprop them, lest their suspicions and fears do end in heartless fainting and discouragement; for Paul, foreseeing that the godly would be most afraid at the terror of the former prophecy, doth set himself to comfort and confirm them. "But we are bound," &c.

2. It is the duty of those who have obtained mercy from the Lord, so to look upon the dreadful judgments, spiritual or temporal, which are inflicted by God upon others, as that they may therein read, and thankfully acknowledge, their own obligation unto the Lord, who dealeth otherways with them; for Paul, being to mention the preservation of those believing Thessalonians from the dreadful judgments formerly spoken of, will not do it but by way of thanksgiving to God, that therein they may see their own duty. "But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you."

3. The more of sanctifying grace, and of other testimonies of God's special love, is bestowed upon a people, the greater obligation is thereby laid upon their faithful pastors to bless the Lord on their behalf; for Paul seeth himself bound to give thanks to God, because God had "chosen" them, &c. See more upon this ground, chap. i. 3.

But, 4. The more a man is beloved of God, he will be the more afraid of antichrist's apostasy, and may the more confidently expect that he shall be preserved from it: for they were "beloved" whom Paul supposes here to be most afraid, and whom he here confirms, and partly from this, that they were "beloved of the Lord."

5. As the elect are above the peril of total and final apostasy, so the ground and reason of their preservation from it is not in themselves, in the strength or firmness of their resolutions, but in the Lord's unchangeable decree, whereby he hath chosen them to eternal life. This is that foundation of the Lord which standeth sure, 2 Tim. ii. 19, and therefore they cannot so fall as to perish; for he confirms them against the fears of falling away, from their election: "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."

6. It is the Lord's allowance that the godly elect should study to make their election sure, and attain to the assurance of it, as that which proveth a powerful preservative, as against other sins, 2 Pet. i. 10, so chiefly against antichristian errors: for if they do not attain to the knowledge of their election, how can they draw comfort and matter of confirmation from it, as the Lord alloweth them to do here? "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."

7. As God's decree of election before time is accompanied with the fruits of saving grace in the elect, begotten in them by the Spirit of God in time, so it is neither possible, nor yet needful for attaining the knowledge of our election, to dive into the depth of God's eternal decree about us, at the first step, but we are to search and try if those fruits and effects of God's electing love be yet wrought in us, and from these conclude that we are elected; for the apostle speaks of faith and sanctification as the fruits of election, by which, and by effectual calling, mentioned ver. 14, a man may gather he is elected: "He hath chosen us through sanctification and belief."

8. As the Lord will infallibly bestow salvation upon the elect, because he hath chosen them to it, and the counsel of the Lord must stand, Prov. xix. 21; so he bestoweth salvation upon none who are destitute of faith and sanctification, the means appointed of God for leading to it: "He hath chosen you to salvation," saith he, "through sanctification and belief."

9. Whomsoever God hath elected to salvation, he hath also, in that same decree, elected them to faith and sanctification, and therefore the foresight of those was not a motive inducing God to elect one more than another; they were good things decreed to be given unto us, and consequently were not foreseen to be in us before he decreed them for us: "For he hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification and belief."

10. As faith and sanctification go always together, the former being the fountain of the latter, and the latter again an evidence of the former, Gal. v. 6; so the motions of God's sanctifying Spirit are always conformed to God's revealed truth, and directed by truth as it is apprehended by faith; and all other motions which are not such, are not of God, whatever they pretend to, Isa. viii. 20: for he joins "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" together.

VER. 14. Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For their further comfort and confirmation from the former ground, he doth here give an evidence that God had chosen them to salvation, even this, that God had effectually "called" them; or, having renewed their wills, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, had by his omnipotent power, Phil. i. 6; ii. 12, 13; made them willingly apply themselves, Psa. cx. 3, to the attaining of those things "whereunto" they were called; to wit, salvation, sanctification, and faith, mentioned ver. 13, to which the first word of this verse doth relate. Which effectual calling is set forth, first, from the external mean by

which it had been brought about; to wit, the preaching of the gospel, called "Paul's gospel," because he was intrusted with the dispensing of it to them, 1 Thess. ii. 4. Next, from the utmost end of their calling; to wit, their "obtaining" that "glory" in heaven which the "Lord Christ" hath purchased, and the same, in some respect, for kind, though not for measure, with that which he himself enjoyeth, Phil. iii. 21, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

DOCTRINES.

1. A man can draw no comfort or confirmation from God's decree of electing him to salvation through sanctification and faith, except he actually apply himself to walk in the way which leadeth to salvation; for he makes the strength of the former consolation and confirmation lie in this, that they were effectually called to sanctification, and consequently had betaken themselves to walk in that way, "whereunto he called you."

2. It is not in the power of fallen man to do so much of himself, though heaven be offered and the way chalked out which leadeth to it, as to betake himself to walk in it, except the Lord incline him powerfully so to do, and by his omnipotent arm draw him that so he may run after him, Cant. i. 4; for he saith it was the "Lord who called them thereunto."

3. However this effectual excitation of sinners, and engaging them to enter the way of salvation, be the work of God alone; yet he maketh use of the gospel preached by his sent ministers, as an outward mean, at or after the preaching whereof he ordinarily doth work powerfully in the hearts of the elect: for he saith, "whereunto he called you by our gospel."

4. As the state of salvation to which the elect are chosen is altogether glorious, comprising what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man to think upon," 1 Cor. ii. 9, so the glory to be enjoyed in that state is the result, not of our endeavours or merit, but of Christ's purchase, and a piece of that glory which Christ in his human nature enjoyeth, who hath gone to heaven for this very end, that where he is there we may be, John xiv. 3: for therefore is it called "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," to the obtaining whereof we are called.

5. Though heaven and glory be purchased by Christ, and designed for the elect in God's eternal and unchangeable decree, (see ver. 13,) yet none attaineth to the actual possession of it, but such as are effectually called and drawn out of nature to the state of grace, and all such shall at last attain it; grace here being a most infallible forerunner of glory hereafter: for he saith, he hath "called you to the obtaining of glory."

VER. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

He confirms them, secondly, by exhorting them that "therefore," to wit, because there was an apostasy to be, ver. 3, and God's electing love was made known unto them, ver. 13, 14, that therefore, I say, they would stand fast and constant in the truth, without yielding ground, as

stout soldiers, (from whom the word is borrowed) which he further explaineth by exhorting them "to hold," as it were by both hands, and against all opposition, "the traditions," or things delivered by him, as the word signifieth, to wit, the exhortations and doctrines, both concerning faith and manners, which they had received from him and "were taught" by him, "whether by word," when he was present with them and preached to them, or by this and the former "epistle" written by him, when he was absent from them.

DOCTRINES.

1. The doctrine of election, and assurance of salvation grounded upon election, doth not make exhortations to duty, reproofs, and threatenings in case of neglect of duty of no effect and useless; in so far as those are means appointed by God for making the elect persevere in the way which leadeth unto that salvation, to which they are appointed: for notwithstanding of what he wrote of election and the infallible evidence of their election, ver. 13, 14, he doth here exhort them "to stand fast and hold the traditions."

2. As the dreadfulness of approaching hazard should not make us lose heart and sit down discouraged, so the faith of through-bearing, flowing from assurance of our election, is so far from being, in its own nature, a pillow for carnal security, that, upon the contrary, it doth forcibly encourage and excite to duty in the face of danger, as knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord: for from what he spoke of the future apostasy, and the evidence they had of God's electing love, he exhorts them, "therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold," &c.

3. Even the elect themselves have been and will be strongly assaulted by antichrist, and in no small hazard to be drawn away with his antichristian errors, except they stand fast as men of courage, and employ the uttermost of their wit and strength to defend the truth of the gospel against those dreadful terrors and subtle snares which antichrist and his emissaries do make use of to drive them and draw them from it: for so much is implied while, speaking to the elect with relation to the assaults of antichrist, he exhorts them to stand as stout soldiers, and to hold the truth, as it were with both hands, against all opposition, as the word signifieth, "therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold," &c.

4. The apostasy of many from the truth, and the prevalence of error, is so far from being, in reason, a motive to make us think the less of truth and to follow the drove, that it ought to make us love truth the better, cleave to it more firmly, and become more rooted in the faith of it, that so the storm which bloweth others up by the roots may not unsettle us: for from what he spoke of a general apostasy to come, he exhorts them that "therefore they would stand fast and hold the traditions."

5. There is no ground here to establish the authority of popish unwritten traditions, as a partial rule of faith and manners of equal authority with the written word of God; for though some of those traditions here mentioned were not written by Paul in any of these two epistles, yet they, as all other truths necessary to salvation, were

committed, either before or after this, to sacred writ, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17: "Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle."

VER. 16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,

He confirms them, thirdly, by praying to God for them, that he would work those things in them which he was pressing upon them; to wit, comfort and constancy. In which prayer he first layeth down some arguments for strengthening both his own and their confidence in expectation of an answer. The first is taken from that near relation wherein Christ and God, to whom he prayeth, did stand towards them. "Christ himself" being "their Lord Jesus Christ," and "God their Father." The second from God's special love to them. The third from the fruits of his love already enjoyed: 1. Consolation; that is, ease of mind from, and encouragement of spirit against, all causes of sorrow; which is actually attained by real believers at some times, *Psa.* xxvii. 1, 2, and all such have sufficient grounds and reason for it always, *Heb.* iii. 17, 18, and the meanest measure of it enjoyed by any here is an earnest of that full and perfect freedom and ease from all sorrows and weights of sin and misery which they shall enjoy in heaven for ever, *John* iv. 14; and therefore is it called "everlasting consolation." 2. "Good hope;" that is, both solid grounds of hope, and the grace of hope itself whereby we make use of those grounds, by expecting all the good things which God hath promised, *Rom.* viii. 25: which two fruits of love are described from their common fountain, God's grace and favour, not only without, but contrary to our deserving, *Isa.* lxiv. 6.

DOCTRINES.

1. That precepts and exhortations to duty do not infer a power in man's free-will to obey, see upon 1 *Thess.* v. 23, *Doct.* 2; for he here prayeth that God would work that in them which he hath presently pressed upon them, "now our Lord Jesus Christ himself," &c.

2. As it is the Lord's blessing and powerful working of his Spirit which maketh the word preached gain ground on hearts, 1 *Cor.* iii. 7; so it is the duty of ministers, and of people also, to deal with God in earnest by prayer for his promised Spirit to accompany the word preached and make it lively; seeing the Lord hath undertaken to give his Holy Spirit unto those who ask him, *Luke* xi. 13: for Paul, having pressed comfort and constancy, doth pray to God that he would "comfort and establish" them, and thereby teacheth them to do the like: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself," &c.

3. That a man may stand fast, especially in trying times, there is more required than conviction of duty, or a fixed resolution to stand to his duty, *Matt.* xxvi. 33, 35; there must be also a continued influence from the Lord, of cheerfulness, comfort and courage, otherwise all will be to little purpose; for Paul seeth this necessary, and

therefore prayeth for it, "now our Lord Jesus Christ himself," &c.

4. That Jesus Christ is true God equal with the Father appeareth from this, that not only he is one who heareth prayer, the author and bestower of all spiritual blessings which are here sought from him, and said to be already bestowed by him, but also he is named before the Father, which certainly had been blasphemous if he were not also true God: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father," &c.

5. That Christ is a distinct person from the Father, though one in substance with him, appears from this, that they are here distinguished by Paul: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father."

6. That God the Father is usually named before the Son doth not infer any inequality betwixt them, but only the order of subsistence and working which is among the persons of the blessed Trinity; for here Christ the second person is named first, to show there is not any such inequality: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father."

7. That our prayers should be directed unto God only, (see upon Eph. i. 17, Doct. 3.) for so doth Paul always direct his: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

8. Our prayers to God should not consist of multiplied petitions only, but ought to be freighted with such arguments and motives for obtaining what we ask, as may strengthen our confidence in expectation of an answer; for such are the apostle's prayers: "Now our Lord which hath loved us, and given us," &c.

9. In seeking things needful from God, we should look upon him, not as standing disaffected to us, and at a distance with us, but according to the nearest relations, which we can reckon ourselves to have unto him; for Paul eyeth Christ and God as his and their Christ and Father: "Now our Lord, and God even our Father."

10. The faith of God's special love doth strongly underprop the heart with confidence of a gracious answer in prayer, as knowing that love in God is communicative of any thing in God that is good and needful for the party loved, Psa. lxxxiv. 11, and that seeing his love hath given Christ, which is more, he will not withhold that which is less, Rom. viii. 32; for Paul doth strengthen his confidence from this ground, while he saith, "which hath loved us."

11. Our former receipts from God should be improved as helps and props for strengthening confidence in expectation of obtaining yet further from him, even whatever our necessities call for, and his glory shall require at our hand: this being the Lord's usual way, to do good because he hath done good; and therefore prayer should not be wholly stuffed with heartless complaints of what we want, there should be a mixture of humble and thankful acknowledgment also of what we already have, and an argument drawn from thence to plead for more; for so doth Paul here: "Who hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope."

12. It is only spiritual receipts, the experience whereof doth alone, and considered apart from

receipts of any other kind, furnish us thus with an argument whereby to plead with God for more, those only being given as an earnest of further, Eph. i. 14, which temporal favours are not, but sometimes given of God in displeasure, and forerunners of his eternal wrath, Psa. xvii. 14; for it is only spiritual receipts from which Paul doth draw an argument here: "Who hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope."

13. True and solid consolation against any thing which causeth grief is only that, which is accompanied with, and floweth from the well-grounded and good hope of eternal glory: and whatever other comfort or joy a man enjoyeth, it is not lasting, much less everlasting, but endeth in greater grief, Eccles. vii. 6; for he joineth these two, "everlasting consolation and good hope."

14. Then doth experience of bypast receipts strengthen much our confidence of receiving more, when we take up God's free grace and favour without and contrary to our deserving as the cause of what hath been bestowed already; in so far as hereby we find an answer to all those doubts, which do arise from our present unworthiness, and misdeservings, even this, the same free grace which overcame our misdeservings then, will overcome them yet; for Paul while he makes bypast receipts plead for obtaining further, doth look on them as flowing from this fountain: "Who hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace."

VER. 17. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

Next, in this prayer is set down what he prayed for; first, the continuance and increase of the same comfort, which they had already received, ver. 16; next, "establishment," and constancy; and this, first, "in every good word," that is, in the faith of good and sound doctrine, opposite to antichristian error, 1 Tim. iv. 6, which agreeth better with the preceding purpose of the whole chapter, than to expone it of their language and discourse. Next, "in every good work," or the practice of holiness in the whole course of their life. See what a good work is upon Eph. ii. 10, Doct. 4.

Hence learn, 1. That a man may stand stedfast in a trying time, he should by all means endeavour to keep his heart in a cheerful frame, by laying hold, with some measure of confidence, upon such grounds of consolation as the gospel affords, 1 Thess. iv. 18, habitual discouragement and dejectedness of mind being the usual forerunner of defection, Heb. xii. 12, 13; for the apostle praying that "God would comfort and establish them," shows that a heart cheered up with the consolations of the gospel is the usual companion of constancy.

2. Not only are the first beginnings of grace from God, but also the daily increase and progress of grace in every degree and step, from the lowest to the highest; for having shown ver. 16, that God had given them the beginnings of consolation, he here prayeth for the increase of it: "Comfort your hearts," saith he.

3. Stability in the faith of true doctrine and in the practice of a holy life do mutually contribute one to another : and error in the point of truth is usually accompanied with some deviation in practice from the rule of a holy life : and profanity of life doth of itself cast men loose to the embracing of such errors as may gratify their unmortified lusts, 2 Tim. iv. 3 ; for he prayeth that God would "stablish them in every good word and work," jointly.

CHAPTER III.

In the first part of this chapter, the apostle doth press upon them four several exhortations to their duty. In the first whereof he exhorts them to pray for himself, and other faithful ministers ; and that, first, for the progress of the gospel committed to them, ver. 1 ; next, for the preservation of their persons, ver. 2. To which he subjoineth a seasonable comfort against their fear, ver. 3. In the second, he exhorts them unto obedience to his doctrine in general, ver. 4. In the third, to the love of God and patience in special, ver. 5. In the fourth, he chargeth them to censure disorderly walkers, or idle loiterers, and to abstain from intimate fellowship with them ; which charge is propounded, first, more generally, ver. 6, and accordingly prosecuted, to ver. 11, while he condemns their disorderly practice ; first, because it was contrary to his own example, ver. 7, who laboured hard among them besides his public preaching, ver. 8, that he might cast them a copy not to live idly, ver. 9. Secondly, it was contrary to his doctrine also, ver. 10. Next, he prosecutes this charge more particularly, to ver. 16 ; while he, first, describes those disorderly walkers from two of their properties, idleness and turbulent curiosity, ver. 11. Next, he doth command them to quit both those vices, ver. 12 ; and thirdly, speaketh to those who walked orderly, first, exhorting them not to grow remiss in well-doing, notwithstanding of their many discouragements, ver. 13. Next, prescribing unto them how to censure delinquents by excommunication, ver. 14 ; and how to use moderation towards the party censured, ver. 15.

In the second part of the chapter hecludeth the epistle ; first, by praying for peace and God's presence to them, ver. 16 ; next, with his usual farewell wish, ver. 18. Having first shown for what use he did always write that part of his epistles with his own hand, ver. 17.

VER. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you :

The apostle having made a transition from the preceding doctrine by the word "finally," implying as the original beareth, there did somewhat yet remain necessary to be added, doth enter the first of his exhortations ; wherein he beseecheth them lovingly as "brethren" to

"pray" for him and his colleagues, and consequently for all other faithful ministers. Particulars to be prayed for are two : the first is in this verse, and hath respect unto the gospel, here called the "word of the Lord," (see upon Phil. i. 14, Doct. 1.) which is intrusted to ministers, 1 Thess. ii. 4 ; and concerning it, they were to "pray," first, that it might "have free course," or (as it is in the original) might "run," that is, be speedily propagated far and near, and all things removed out of the way which might hinder its course. Next, that it might be "glorified," even as it was with those Thessalonians, that is, not only be mightily prevalent in converting many to God, whereby the glorious power of God working by it should be seen and acknowledged, 1 Cor. xiv. 25, but also the profession of the gospel might be adorned with the answerable fruits of a holy life in those who hear it, which brings no small glory and credit to the gospel, Tit. ii. 10, as the profane life of professors doth dishonour it, 2 Pet. ii. 2.

DOCTRINES.

1. See a doctrine from the word, "finally," or "furthermore," upon 1 Thess. iv. 1, Doct. 4, "finally, brethren."

2. Most eminent Christians for gifts and graces are usually most sensible of their own wants, and so far from undervaluing others, being compared with themselves, that they highly prize what worth is in them, and can pleasantly stoop to receive some spiritual benefit and advantage from them ; for though Paul did exceed them all in spiritual endowments, yet he most affectionately seeketh the help of their prayers : "Finally, brethren, pray for us."

3. Ministers should so lay out and employ what stock of gifts and graces they already have for the good of the Lord's people, as that they jointly endeavour by all means, of reading, meditation, 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15, and of prayer by themselves, 2 Cor. vii. 5, and of others, to acquire a new supply of strength and furniture for enabling them to their work, lest otherwise they run dry, and have little or nothing to say unto any good purpose, 1 Tim. iv. 15 ; for Paul having instructed them, and prayed for them in the former part of this epistle, doth now beseech them to deal with God, for a new recruit of furniture for him ; "Pray for us."

4. As it is the duty of Christian brethren mutually to pray for, and to require the performance of this duty from one another, so the most effectual way for engaging others to pray for us, is to make them know we pray for them, and that we esteem of them as such whose prayers are somewhat worth ; for Paul being to crave the help of their prayers, did show, chap. ii. ver. 16, that he prayed for them, and doth here show he esteemed them as "brethren," that hereby he may engage them : "Brethren, pray for us."

5. The great care of a faithful minister, and that which lieth nearest to his heart, and which of any other thing he recommendeth most to the care of others, is, not so much his own personal respect or preservation from hazard, as the success and thriving of the gospel by the blessing of God upon his pains, and the pains of others ; for

this it is he recommends unto them to be prayed for in the first place, and the care of his own person but in the second. "Pray for us," saith he, "that the word of the Lord may have free course."

6. It is the duty of the Lord's people and servants not only to give the gospel countenance and entertainment where it already is, but also to have enlarged desires, seconded with the utmost of orderly endeavours, for the spreading and propagation of the gospel unto those places where it is not; for this is it that Paul would have them to pray for here, even "that the word of the Lord may have free course."

7. So great and many are those obstructions cast in by the devil and men in the way of the gospel's progress, Acts x. 23, that no human endeavours, nor any thing else except the omnipotent power of God, can fully remove them; for he seeth a necessity of prayer to God, "that the word of the Lord may have free course."

8. It is the duty of ministers and people not only to endeavour that the gospel may run through the tongues and ears of many, and outward subjection be rendered to it, but also that it be received in hearts, and that so much be testified by the holy life and conversation of those who do receive it: neither are they to rest satisfied with the former without some promising evidences of the latter: for he will have them to pray not only that the gospel may have free course, but also that it "may be glorified." See the Exposition.

9. That the word of the Lord hath prevailed mightily with ourselves, and carried us captive to the obedience of it, should serve us both as an incitement to deal with God in behalf of others, that they may be gained in like manner, seeing grace is not envious, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, and for a ground of hope that our labour of that sort shall not be in vain in the Lord: for that he may incite them to pray for others with confidence, he minds them how the gospel had prevailed with themselves: "Even as it is with you," saith he.

VER. 2. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

Here is, first, the second particular to be prayed for, and it respecteth the person of Paul, and of other faithful ministers, concerning whom they were to pray that they might be preserved and delivered (to wit, so long as God had any work for them, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26,) from the cruelty and snares both of open and secret enemies, who are here called, first, "unreasonable," that is, men demented, whom no reason could satisfy, or (as the Greek word implieth) "men of no abode," possibly the vagrant Jews, or men unworthy to have any place or respect among men. Next, "wicked," that is, men of a vicious life, or, more particularly (as the original also implieth) men desirous of trouble, and procuring trouble to others. Secondly, he gives a reason why this petition for their delivery and preservation was necessary, and also hints at the cause of men's absurdity and wickedness presently spoken of;

to wit, because many, even of those within the visible church, had not the grace of saving faith; and leaveth it unto them to gather that no good was to be expected from such to Christ's faithful ministers.

DOCTRINES.

1. Not only the gospel which ministers do carry, but also the persons of ministers for the gospel's sake, should be respected and cared for, both by themselves, and by the Lord's people of their charge. Those earthen vessels should be regarded because of the precious liquor contained in them; for Paul having recommended unto them to pray for the spreading of the gospel in the first place, doth now enjoin them to pray for the preservation of his person and of other faithful ministers in the next. "And that we may be delivered," saith he.

2. As faithful ministers may always look to meet with opposition, so they who oppose them most, and the work of God in their hands, are usually men of turbulent spirits, unreasonable carriage, and for one bad property or other somewhat infamous, even such as Paul's opposites here spoken of; "That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men."

3. Wherever a spirit of opposition against the public ministry doth enter, it turneth malapert and shameless, so that no eminency of parts, of place, or unblameableness of life in Christ's ministers, can prove a sufficient sanctuary to shelter them from it: for Paul was eminent for all those, and yet those absurd and shameless men did create trouble and hazard to him: "That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men."

4. The visible church hath always in it a mixed multitude of good and bad, wheat and tares, Matt. xiii. 24; neither have the labours of the most eminent ministers been ever, for what appeareth, so far blessed of God, as to be the means of conveying saving grace unto all who heard them; for he sheweth that even in that time when the apostles were preachers, "all men had not faith;" and this must be understood of men in the visible church, for they knew sufficiently that all others who were without the church had it not.

5. As the grace of saving faith doth powerfully restrain a man's turbulent, sensual and irrational affections, so any other restraint, where this is wanting, will prove but weak to keep them at under, if a suitable temptation be once presented; for he makes their want of faith the cause of their unreasonable, turbulent and wicked carriage: "For all men have not faith," saith he.

6. As the grace of faith is not bestowed by God upon all who hear the gospel, but upon some only, even the elect, Acts xiii. 48, so it is a speaking evidence that such have no faith who prove shameless, absurd and turbulent in their opposition to faithful ministers, and to the work of God in their hands: for he maketh their opposition flow from their want of faith: "For all men have not faith," saith he.

VER. 3. But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.

The apostle doth here encourage them against their fear of falling from truth, which he foresaw would readily arise from what he presently spoke, of the many open and secret enemies to truth, and to the sincere preachers and professors thereof; as appeareth from the adversative particule "but:" and he encourageth them by assuring them that God would, first, stablish or confirm them in good, so as they should not totally nor finally fall from it, 1 John iii. 9. 2. Most carefully keep them, as a prison is kept, as the word implieth, "from evil," that is, from Satan that evil one, together with all his evil and mischievous devices, even every evil work, 2 Tim. iv. 18, to wit, so as sin should not have dominion over them, Rom. vi. 14. The truth of all which is confirmed from this that "God is faithful," one who may be trusted, and will perform whatever he hath promised; where he supposeth that God hath promised never to leave them, who have once sincerely closed with him, according to John x. 28, and therefore his faithfulness must be engaged to establish and keep them.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the truly godly, upon the apprehension of any pinching hazard, are of all men aptest to be discouraged with thoughts of their own weakness, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, so it is the duty of every faithful minister carefully to foresee what may prove discouraging to any such, and tenderly guard against it; yea, such should be his tenderness in this, that their hazard should make him in a manner forget his own: for though the rage of enemies was mainly bent against Paul's own person, yet he is more taken up how to guard against the discouragement of the Lord's people, which he foresaw would arise from it, than to provide for his own safety. "But the Lord is faithful," saith he, "who will stablish you."

2. Then doth a minister wisely guard and underprop the Lord's people against discouragements arising from their own apprehended weakness, when he doth not labour to possess them with the contrary thoughts of their own strength, which indeed is none, 2 Cor. iii. 5, but rather confirming whatever thoughts they have of that kind, he doth fasten them upon the power and faithfulness of God for their support; for so doth Paul here: "But the Lord is faithful," saith he, "who will stablish you."

3. That God's fidelity is implied for the performance of his promises, see upon 1 Thess. v. 24, Doct. 5, "for God is faithful."

4. The final perseverance of believers in good, and their preservation from evil in the extent mentioned in the exposition, is absolutely promised, and most undoubtedly shall be performed: for the imploding of God's faithfulness for it, implieth that it is a thing promised. "But God is faithful who shall stablish you," &c.

5. The infallible perseverance of the saints in good, and their preservation from evil, doth not flow from the nature of grace in itself, which is but a created quality, and may be crushed if there were not some external help to underprop it, Rev. iii. 2; nor yet from any fixedness of their own resolutions, which are in themselves but changeable, Jer. xx. 9, but from the power of God, who

standeth engaged to bear them through against all opposition in the contrary. "But God is faithful," saith he, "who will stablish you."

VER. 4. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

Here is his second exhortation, wherein he doth most effectually, though indirectly, incite them to obey the doctrine delivered by him in general, as the rule of their life and conversation, while he professeth his charitable "confidence," grounded "upon the Lord" and his grace, of their present and future obedience to what he had commanded them in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, as the word in the original doth imply. See upon 1 Thess. iv. 2. Understand him here to speak, first, of the present obedience of the most part, as to the main of his injunctions, though in some things they were defective, as appeareth from ver. 6, &c.; and, secondly, of the fewer, though better part, as to all his injunctions in general; and, thirdly, of them all as to their future obedience, whereof he was charitably confident, though for the present, as said is, they were in some things blameworthy.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is the duty of ministers towards the Lord's people of their charge, and of all Christians mutually towards one another, charitably to believe and hope the best of their inward good condition and perseverance in it, where there are any probable, though not infallible, evidence; for charity thinks no evil, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Thus Paul had confidence that they both did and would do, &c.

2. We ought to ground our charitable confidence of people's perseverance in well-doing, not in themselves whatever be their present goodness, (for all men are weak, Matt. xxvi. 41, and liars, Rom. iii. 4,) but in the Lord, who alone can powerfully incline their hearts to good and preserve them in it; for Paul had confidence, not in them, but "in the Lord" concerning them.

3. It is a singular piece of ministerial prudence for a minister, in some cases, and when he hath to do with some people, especially those in whom he seeth any appearance of good, and yet an aptness not to be discouraged with the bad thoughts which discerning gracious men may have concerning them, to point out to such their duty, and to incite them to it, rather by showing his charitable thoughts of their present and future obedience, than by a rigid pressing of their duty on them, joined with an upbraiding of them for some present neglects, and his professed diffidence of their amendment in time coming; for Paul incites them to obedience by professing the confidence he had of them. "And we have confidence that ye both do and will do."

4. It is the duty of people to improve what place they have in the charity of faithful ministers or discerning Christians, as a spur to incite them to further diligence, and to walk answerable to that esteem which others have of them, and not to rest upon it, as if having it they had

enough; for Paul doth express his charitable confidence of them, that they may be thereby incited to their duty: "We have confidence that ye both do and will do."

5. As the life of a Christian is more in practice and in doing, than in profession and word-speaking, so the rule of their practice is not the example of others, Exod. xxiii. 2, nor yet the dictates of their mother-wit or natural reason, Rom. i. 21, 22, and much less, the sway and inclination of their corrupt affections, Isa. lvii. 17, but the word of God, and those injunctions of his sent ministers, which they, as his lion-heralds do press upon them from him: for he expresseth the Christian man's exercise, by doing what he commanded them in the name and authority of Jesus Christ: "Ye both do and will do the things which we command you," saith he.

6. The practice and obedience of Christians according to the forementioned rule, must be both universal, extending itself to all that is commanded, and constant, so as not only they begin well, but also continue unto their journey's end; for so was their obedience: "We are confident ye both do, and will do the things which we command."

VER. 5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Followeth his third exhortation, whereby, while he prayeth the Lord to "direct their hearts," or make them straight, he doth also indirectly incite them to the exercise of two graces which are chief parts of, and have special influence upon the obedience formerly pressed. First, by "the love of God," understand, that whereby we love God: under which is contained love to our neighbour, as a stream flowing from that fountain, Matt. xxii. 37—39; although the sense and feeling of God's love to us spoken of Rom. v. 5, needeth not to be excluded. Secondly, "patient waiting for Christ," or (as the word is in the original) patience of Christ. It implieth patience with expectation, even such a patient enduring of hardships in the way of our duty for Christ's sake, as is joined with, and floweth from a well-grounded expectation of good things to be received from Christ, especially at his second coming.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the hearts of men are in the hand of the Lord, who alone can powerfully incline, direct, and turn them wherever he will, Prov. xxi. 1; so it concerneth us highly to see to the heart that it be rightly inclined, seeing wheresoever it goeth, it doth powerfully draw the whole man with it; for Paul doth pray "the Lord to direct their hearts."

2. That Christians do continue constant in the course of begun obedience, there is of necessity required a continual supply of influence from God, together with some fervour of love to him, and patient expectation of good things to be received from him, which may serve as cords to draw us forward in the way of duty, against all

temptations and discouragements which will be otherwise prevalent to retard and draw us backward, 2 Cor. v. 14, Psa. xxvii. 13; for as a mean of their continuing to do what he commanded them, he prayeth the "Lord to direct their hearts into the love of God, and patient waiting for Christ."

3. As the heart of man is by nature crooked and perverse, so it is in a special manner averse from the love of God, whom, though he be the chief good, yet every man by nature doth hate, though not as he is Creator and Preserver of the world, yet as he is a just Judge, armed with vengeance against evil doers; yea, and there are dregs of this averseness even in the truly godly, who have a law in their members rebelling against the law of God written in their mind and renewed part, Rom. vii. 23; for this crookedness and averseness from love to God is implied, while he prayeth the Lord "to direct," or make straight, "their hearts into the love of God."

4. The hearts of men by nature are also averse from undergoing a suffering lot for Christ, and from taking that comfort under the cross which ariseth from the hope of a promised outgate and reward; as being unwilling to give any further trust to the precious promises than they see of present performance, 2 Pet. iii. 4; yea, and there are dregs of this averseness also in the truly regenerate, (though not allowed of by themselves, Psa. xlii. 9,) as appeareth from their desire to shift a cleanly cross, Matt. xvi. 22, and therefore small courage oftentimes under it, Heb. xii. 13, or hopes of an outgate from it, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1; for averseness is also implied while he prayeth the Lord "to direct their hearts into the patient waiting for Christ."

5. How averse soever the hearts of men in nature, or of men renewed, are from the exercise of those or other graces, yet there is omnipotency in God to make them straight when he will, and to incline them powerfully to love where they hate; to take up a cross for Christ contentedly, and to hope for what they see not confidently; for while the apostle prayeth that the Lord would direct them to love and patience, he doth suppose that God had power so to direct them.

6. The graces of love to God, of patience under a suffering lot, and of well-grounded hope, do well together, in so far as where love to God is rooted in the heart, together with a firm expectation of all those good things contained in the promise to be received from him, there can be nothing too hard to be undergone and suffered for him, Rom. viii. 35, 2 Cor. iv. 16, with 5; for Paul doth pray for all those jointly, even the "love of God and patient waiting for Christ:" see the Exposition.

VER. 6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Here beginneth his fourth exhortation, upon which he insisteth most and dealeth more pe-

remptorily in it than in any of the former, as that which is his great work in the first part of this chapter, and to which all the rest have been preparatory insinuations. And first, being to handle this purpose more generally to ver. 11, he straitly "commands" them "in the name" and authority of "Jesus Christ to withdraw from," or have no familiar intimate fellowship with, "any brother," or Christian in external profession, "who walketh disorderly," or that as a disorderly soldier (from which the word in the original is borrowed) did in any ways transgress the order, bounds, and limits of his particular calling and station assigned him by God, and thereby proved offensive to the church; and especially such as lived idly, neglecting their own business, and intruded themselves upon the affairs of others, (see ver. 11,) even all those (as the apostle doth here further explain himself) who walked contrary unto and not after "that tradition" or doctrine, delivered by him against idlers, whereof ver. 10, and therefore were to be discountenanced, and their company abandoned as is here commanded. Now, though every Christian is bound to abstain from all voluntary and unnecessary fellowship with profane men, in so far as they do not seem to countenance or encourage them in their sin, even though they be not excommunicated and cast out by the church, *Psa. xxvi. 4, 5*; yet seeing it is clear the apostle speaketh of excommunication ver. 14, and the disorderly walking here mentioned is a sin continued in, after public, *1 Thess. iv. 11*, and private admonition, *1 Thess. v. 14*, therefore the withdrawing from their fellowship here commanded, seemeth to be the consequent of the church's public censure, in the enjoining whereof the antecedent censure is enjoined also, to wit, that the church guides should excommunicate the contumacious, and all church members should withdraw from the party so censured. And seeing this purpose is handled here more generally, and to be insisted on more particularly ver. 11, &c., I shall only observe these general doctrines from it.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though ministers ought in wisdom to deal with the Lord's people, for the most part, by meek entreaties and prudent insinuations, (see ver. 4, *Doct. 3.*) yet where their authority, or rather the authority of Christ in them, hath been contemned, their meekness abused, and when they have to do with a prevalent growing evil, it is their duty to be more peremptory, and with all authority to charge and command; for so doth Paul here in those cases: "Now we command you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The sharpness of their most peremptory commands should be in prudence allayed somewhat, with a seasonable mixture of their affection and brotherly love to those whom they so command, lest otherwise their imperious way be looked upon as a piece of insolency, and meet with contempt and disdain instead of obedience; for so doth the apostle here while he calleth them "brethren;" "Now we command you, brethren," &c.

3. A minister should also see to it carefully, that his peremptory commands and threatenings be grounded upon the authority of Christ, as being first enjoined and denounced by him, otherwise he cannot expect that any thing spoken by him, though with never so much authority, zeal and boldness, can have great weight in people's consciences; for such were Paul's peremptory commands: "We command you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. It hath ever been the lot of the church of Christ to have some professors in it, whose way and carriage hath been in no measure answerable unto that which they did profess; for even in this church, so highly commended, *chap. i. 3, 4*, there were some such, as is supposed while he bids them "withdraw from every brother," or church member, "who walketh disorderly."

5. The way and carriage of such is more to be detested and shunned, than if they were professed enemies, in so far as they are a greater reproach to the gospel, *2 Pet. ii. 13*, and make the name of God which they profess to be blasphemed by others, *Rom. ii. 23, 24*; for Paul bids "withdraw," not so much from avowed heathens, as "from every brother that walketh disorderly."

6. There is no church member whose quality, rank or station, doth wholly exempt his disorderly, scandalous walking from the ecclesiastical cognition of Christ's ministers, or can keep the Lord's people free of hurt and damage from his evil example, if they converse familiarly with him; for he bids the people "withdraw from every brother," without exception, "who walketh disorderly;" which supposeth that the church guides should first censure them, as was shown in the exposition.

7. There is a difference to be made, both in the inflicting of church censure by church guides and in the withdrawing of familiar fellowship by private Christians, betwixt those who, being surprised with some violent temptation, do but once or twice step aside from the rule of their duty, and others whose continued strain and course of life is still disorderly; for he bids "withdraw" only from those "who walk disorderly," or whose continued way and course were such, as the word "walk" imports.

8. So hardly are our hearts brought up to a perfect hatred and detestation of sin, that though possibly we have some abhorrence from committing it ourselves, yet we take a pleasure in them who do it, and with great difficulty we are made to withdraw from them, or discountenance them in it; for therefore, he seeth it needful to give them such a peremptory charge; "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from them that walk disorderly;" and the word rendered "withdraw," signifieth to abstain from that whither the sway and inclination of our mind doth carry us.

9. As once receiving and professed embracing of divine truths for the rule of duty, doth make the rejecter thereof more guilty, than if he had not received them at all, so those who live disorderly whose life and conversation is not ordered according to the prescript of God's word, how strictly soever they do conform themselves to the civil laws of the land wherein they

live; for he saith, that "brother did walk disorderly," who did not walk "according to the tradition," or doctrine delivered by him from God, and aggravateth their sin from this, that they had once received that tradition. "And not after the tradition which he received of us," saith he.

VER. 7. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Here is a reason serving both to enforce the duty of censuring, and withdrawing from those, who walked disorderly, and to aggravate the sin of those who did so walk. It is taken from the apostle's example, propounded first here in general. "He walked not disorderly," that is, lived not idly, as he after explains. And for the force of this reason to condemn the contrary practice, he appealeth to their own conscience, if they did not know and were sufficiently convinced of their obligation to follow his example, and to discountenance those who did otherwise, to wit, in so far as he was a follower of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1. as he was indeed in this particular, and they did also know it.

DOCTRINES.

1. As Christians ought to walk according to their knowledge, so he is not worthy of the name of a Christian who knoweth not this, that a man is bound to follow the example of his minister, in so far as he doth follow Christ; seeing ministers are given to teach the Lord's people not by their doctrine only but by their example also, 1 Tim. iv. 12: for Paul supposeth they knew how they ought to follow him, and draws an argument from thence for pressing this duty upon themselves, "for ye yourselves know how ye ought to follow us."

2. As all who know their duty do not walk according to it, but too many do live in the practice of those evils, for which their heart, their light, and conscience doth condemn them, so sins done against knowledge have in them a singular weight and aggravation beyond sins of ignorance. They make the sinner more inexcusable, Rom. ii. 1, and his punishment the greater, Luke xii. 47, for he aggravateth their sin from this that they knew they should have followed his example, and yet did it not: "for yourselves know how ye ought to follow us," saith he.

3. It aggravateth also our neglect of duty not a little, that we not only know our duty, but also have a cloud of witnesses and shining examples going before us in the way of our duty, whereby all pretence of impossibility to perform our duty is removed, seeing men subject to the like infirmities have already practised it; for he aggravateth their sin from this, that he and his associates had given them an example in the contrary, "we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you."

4. It concerneth much the Lord's servants, who are sent to press the practice of duty to others, so to walk as their life and carriage may hold out a copy of that obedience which they require from

the Lord's people. Hereby their doctrine hath the greater weight, Matt. v. 15, 16, and otherwise they are a reproach to the gospel, 1 Sam. ii. 17, and they themselves at least do reap no profit by it, 1 Cor. ix. 23; for Paul practised himself what he pressed upon others: "We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you."

VER. 8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

He applieth what he spoke of his own example in general to the particular wherein they were guilty, by showing he "did not eat bread," or take his ordinary food in meat and drink, as Gen. iii. 19, "from any man for nought," or without money and price paid for it. Where he speaks according to the common opinion of earthly-minded men, who think whatever maintenance is given to ministers for their ministerial labours is bestowed upon them for nought, though it be not so, Matt. x. 10. Now the apostle sheweth that even in their sense he took nothing for nought, but that he might be able to sustain himself, besides his public preaching (which was his proper employment, 1 Cor. i. 17,) he wrought in tent-making, Acts xviii. 3, even to weariness, and after he was wearied, as the words, "labour and travail," do imply, and that both "night and day," (see upon 1 Thess. ii. 9;) and he mentioneth a twofold end proposed to himself why he did so work; the first is in this verse, "that he might not be chargeable," or burthensome to "any" of them. He meaneth not as if the maintenance of a minister should be accounted a burthen by the flock, but that some miserable wretches among them would have thought it so. Besides, it is not improbable that a great part (though not all, Acts xvii. 4,) of those who had first received the gospel in that city were of the poorer sort, whom he had no will indeed to burthen. Besides what is marked upon a parallel place, 1 Thess. ii. 9, Doct. 3—5, concerning 1. A necessity lying upon men of demitting themselves to the meanest of employments before they want a mean of livelihood. 2. The lawfulness of a minister's using some handy labour in some cases. 3. The groundlessness of the Popish tenet about works of supererogation.

Observe further, hence, 1. Circumstances of time, place, company and such like, may make an action become exceeding sinful; and abstinence from it a necessary duty at some times, the practice whereof is in itself indifferent, lawful, yea, and in some cases necessary: for all things being considered, it was a necessary duty for Paul not to take bread of those Thessalonians without price, though the thing in itself be not simply unlawful. Otherwise, hospitality and giving of meat for nought could not be commanded, Titus i. 8, nor those ancient lovefeasts among Christian friends could be commended, as we find they are, Jude 12; "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought."

2. The Lord doth sometimes call his servants to spend and be spent among a people, from

whom they do receive or can expect but little of worldly encouragement, that thereby they may have an occasion to make their sincerity in the work of the Lord appear both to their own heart and the consciences of others, who may evidently see their ministers are not seeking theirs but them, 2 Cor. xii. 14; for Paul did not receive so much encouragement worldly as bread to eat among those Thessalonians. "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought."

3. It pleases the Lord in deepest wisdom, sometimes, to measure out a very hard lot in things worldly to his dearest servants, and to give but little of earth to those who glorify him most upon earth, and upon whom he intends to bestow a more than ordinary measure of glory in heaven, that none may know by those things whether he be worthy of love or hatred, Eccles. ix. 1, for even Paul, that elect vessel of the Lord, is made to work for a livelihood "with labour and travail night and day."

4. Though ministers are not tied to follow this example of Paul's here recorded, in all particulars, because of the great inequality betwixt him and them, by reason of his supereminant gifts, and his extraordinary assistance, which made it less necessary for him to spend so much of his time in reading and preparation for public duties, as ordinary ministers must do. Besides, that some reasons peculiar to this church and to that of Corinth, did oblige him so to walk towards them, though he did not find himself so obliged towards others who had not the like reasons. However, I say, that therefore other ordinary ministers are not tied to follow his example in all particulars; yet they are so far to follow it, as to endeavour that the gospel which they preach may be as little burthensome and chargeable to people as in them lieth: for this was the thing Paul aimed at, "that we might not be chargeable unto any of you," saith he.

5. It is a duty incumbent unto the Lord's people to maintain their ministers in a way creditable to the gospel, even when through reason of poverty, their so doing would prove burthensome unto them; for he saith not, that they ought not to have sustained him, because of their poverty, only he would not eat their bread for nought, "that he might not be burthensome unto them," and ver. 9, he asserts his own power and right to have exacted maintenance from them, and consequently they were bound to give it.

VER. 9. Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Lest the apostle's example had been urged by covetous wretches, for a law and rule to the prejudice of other ministers, though not in the same circumstantial case with Paul, he doth therefore, first, assert his "power" and right to take maintenance from them, so that his not exacting it was not because "he had not power" to demand it. Next, he mentioneth this second end why he laboured so hard, and did not exact his right, to wit, that he might thereby in his own practice hold forth a lively "example" and copy to be

followed by them, both in what he had prescribed to them about diligence in some lawful calling, seeing he did more than otherwise he needed for their example and encouragement, as also in departing somewhat from their right as he had done, rather than they should overburthen their brethren.

DOCTRINES.

1. Though there is nothing more reasonable than that they which wait at the altar be partakers of the altar, 1 Cor. ix. 3, and that a minister who spends his time and strength among a people should be maintained by them; yet the contrary opinion hath been early hatched and always held on foot by some, who look upon the ministry as an idle calling, and that nothing of right belongeth to them who labour in it, as due unto them for their work's sake, Satan hereby taking advantage of the earthly-mindedness of some, and heart-ennemy to the gospel in others, to starve the gospel and public ordinances of God's worship out of the world, when he cannot prevail to drive them away by force; for Paul foresaw there would be some so disposed, and therefore asserts the right of ministers to exact maintenance, "not because we have not power," saith he.

2. It concerneth therefore the ministers of Jesus Christ to assert their right, both by the laws of God and men, to a competency of worldly maintenance, and carefully to guard lest any deed of theirs do weaken their right, though not so much from respect to themselves, who, at least many of them, have sufficient parts to employ in any other calling for gaining their livelihood, as well as other men, but from respect to the gospel and the eternal well-being of people's souls; for Paul foreseeing that his example would possibly be alleged by some covetous misers to enervate the divine right of ministers to maintenance, he doth here assert it, "not because we have not power," saith he.

3. Christian sobriety will teach a man so to speak to the commendation of his own moderation, and not exacting the rigour of his right in some cases, as that he do not reflect upon others who do not exercise the same moderation, as not being called to it, because they are not in the same case; for Paul doth not reflect upon the practice of other ministers, who not being in the like case with him, should exact maintenance, while he asserteth both his own and their right to it. "Not because we have not power," saith he.

4. Not only ministers, but all and every one are bound to remit somewhat of that, which, in strictest justice they might exact, rather than to overburthen and break their poor brethren, by exacting all their right from them; for he holds forth his example in remitting of his right to be followed not only by ministers, but the people also in the like case; "But to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us," saith he.

5. The Lord's ministers should, as by all lawful means, so especially by the exercise of wise and justifiable moderation in things relating to this present world, endeavour to gain that love and respect among the people of their flock, whereby they may be the more incited to follow

their example in things honest and just; especially seeing such is the humour of people, as not to trouble themselves much in following their copy, except they affect and respect the hand that wrote it; for Paul did remit of that which was otherwise his just right, to make himself "an example unto them to follow him."

VER. 10. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Here is a second reason, serving both to condemn the sin of idleness, and their neglect of censuring that sin, because their practice herein was not only contrary to his example, as is already shown, but also to his doctrine, whereby he had commanded, and by his apostolic authority enacted for a standing law, that "whosoever," having otherwise strength and opportunity, "will not work," that is, employ either his body or mind, or both, in some honest labour, for promoting one way or other the good of mankind, such a man "should not eat," that is, should not be borne with, fed, or maintained among Christians, that so, being reduced to straits, he may be constrained to betake himself to some honest employment.

DOCTRINES.

1. As the Lord's ministers should press upon people not only practice of religious duties, but also painfulness and diligence in some particular calling, so it is the duty of the Lord's people, and of every one in their station, to promote obedience to the lawful commands of Christ's ministers, both in themselves and in others; for Paul doth press upon all to work in some particular calling, and to promote obedience to his direction herein, by discountenancing such as would not obey, while he commandeth that "if any would not work, neither should he eat."

2. As it is the duty of ministers to give timeous warning against a sin when it beginneth to spread, and before it come to a height among a people, so the more timeous warning hath been given of the evil that is in any sin, the greater is their guilt who, notwithstanding, continue in it, or do not what they might and should to suppress it; for Paul had given order timeously, even while he was with them, to suppress this sin of idleness, and doth hence aggravate their guilt in that they had not done so: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you."

3. It concerneth all men, and especially those who are intrusted with the church's common charity, to employ it wisely, and so as, to the best of their knowledge, they do not thereby furnish fuel to the lusts of any, or feed them in their sinful idleness, or any other way misapply it to such as are not due objects; for the command is given to all men, chiefly to the church-guides, that they do not employ their own, or the church's charity, to maintain idle vagabonds and wilful loiterers. "If any would not work, neither should he eat."

4. It is the Lord's allowance that those who

do not work, not because they will not, but either they are not able to work, or though they be able and gladly would, yet cannot get employment to work, I say it is the Lord's allowance that such be, so far as is possible, maintained upon the charity of others, especially if they have nothing of their own whereby to maintain themselves; for the command is not given about those who do not work, through want of ability or of opportunity, but only them "who will not work, that they should not eat."

VER. 11. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

The apostle being to speak both to idle loiterers, and to this church which did tolerate them, more particularly to ver. 16, doth first both give a reason of what he hath said to this purpose already, from ver. 6, as appears from the causal particle "for," and also make way for that which he is yet to speak more, while he sheweth he had spoken nothing rashly or without ground, but had heard (doubtless by trustworthy informers, such as are mentioned 1 Cor. i. 11,) that, notwithstanding of his former warning, 1 Thess. iv. 11, and v. 14, there "were some who walked disorderly among them," and were not censured by them; whom he describeth from two of their properties, which seem repugnant, and yet do well agree, and usually go together. "They do nothing at all," to wit, in those things which they ought, and to which they have a calling; and "yet are busy-bodies," and but too diligent, to wit, about those things which belong not to them.

DOCTRINES.

1. It is not contrary to charity and prudence for one Christian to report, dilate, and make relation of what miscarriages he doth observe in others, providing he do not thereby seek their disgrace and shame, but their amendment, and in order to that end do report their faults, chiefly to those who may by some means contribute to help forward their repentance; for some did certainly make report of those miscarriages in this church to Paul, who had power to take order with them, otherwise he could not have heard them: "For we hear that there are some," &c.

2. As ministers should not charge a church or particular person with the guilt of any sin rashly, or without a ground, lest otherwise his precipitant rashness do discover in him the want of prudence and charity; so it is not rashness in a minister to reprove and tax a man, of whose guilt, in that particular for which he doth reprove him, he knoweth nothing but by report only, providing he believe not every report, but what he hath from trustworthy informers, 1 Cor. i. 11: for Paul, to clear himself, that he had not taxed them rashly, doth show "he heard that there were some among them who walked disorderly."

3. It concerneth a minister prudently to inquire, and seek to know what fruits the gospel preached by him doth bring forth among the people of his charge, what sins are most pre-

valent with them, and what virtues are exercised by them, that thereby he may be the more enabled for speaking pertinently unto them; for in order to this end Paul did labour to inform himself, otherwise he would not so readily have "heard that there were some which walked among them disorderly, working not at all."

4. It is the part of a wise reprovor not to charge the faults of a few upon all in common, lest instead of convincing those who are guilty, and making them better, he irritate those who are not guilty, and make them worse; thus doth Paul in wisdom astrict his charge to some among them only: "I hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly."

5. There have been always some in the church, who, having taken on a name for profession, and possibly thereby come to some respect among the godly, have, under a pretext of giving themselves to more than ordinary devotion, cast by all care of any particular calling, and lived hand-idle, to the hurt of others upon whom they lived, and to the reproach of the gospel; for such were they in this church, "some who walked disorderly, working nothing at all."

6. The mind of man cannot be wholly idle, but must be employed in somewhat, if not in doing what is good and profitable, then of necessity in what is evil, useless, or hurtful; and usually none are more busy in other men's matters, than they who wholly neglect their own: for those disorderly walkers "did not work at all" in their own affairs, and yet "were busy-bodies" in the affairs of others.

VER. 12. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

He doth, next, speak to those who were guilty of walking disorderly, and both peremptorily "commands" them, and most affectionately "exhorts" them, in the "name" and authority of "Christ the Lord," first, "to work," and so to quit idleness; secondly, to "work with quietness," that is, containing themselves within the bounds of their calling, without creating trouble, either to themselves or others; from which would follow, thirdly, "they should eat their own bread," gotten by their own labours, and not given them in alms, or for nought.

DOCTRINES.

1. So great a tyrant is custom in any sin, and especially a custom of lazy ease and idleness, that, when a people are once habituated to it, they are very hardly driven from it; for his charging them so hard to quit their idleness implieth that it was great difficulty to drive them from it, being now for a long time accustomed to it: "Now them that are such we command and exhort."

2. When sins do grow so common, that, either through the moral guilt which is in them, or the civil inconvenience which followeth upon them, or both, they do portend no less than apparent ruin to the whole church, then especially should

the Lord's ministers bend the utmost of their endeavours, what by themselves, and what by others, to suppress them, and to reclaim the Lord's people from the practice of them; for this sin of idleness did threaten the dissipation of the church, both morally, considering the great guilt was in it, and civilly, considering how poor this church in all probability was; and therefore the apostle is so fervent and serious to suppress it, and to stir up the whole church to take notice of it: "Now them that are such we command and exhort."

3. So merciful is God, that he doth not wholly cease to deal with sinners as if they were desperate, after one or more repulses, but gives them many renewed onsets whereby he intendeth to gain some, John iv. 7, 10, 13, 16, 21, 26, and to make others more inexcusable, Matt. xi. 21, 22; for though those idlers had received several admonitions to no purpose, yet Paul, in Christ's name and authority, and by warrant from him, doth here again "command and exhort them that with quietness they work."

4. Though the sentence of excommunication, as we shall hear from ver. 14, be in itself lawful, yet so dreadful is it, that there should be a kind of lothness in Christ's ministers to pronounce it, if by any other means they may draw the obstinate sinner to repentance, and so prevent it; for, notwithstanding of many former admonitions, he doth here give them one further, before he give order to pronounce the sentence: "Now them that are such we command and exhort."

5. Such should be a minister's way of dealing with most obdurate sinners, in order to their gaining, as that he make known he doth not look upon them as wholly void of all sense of God and goodness, and secretly, at least, insinuate he hath yet some contrary thoughts of them; that thereby, if it be possible, he may quicken any dying principle of conscience, any sense of heaven or hell, of right or wrong, and any awe of God which yet may be lurking in them; for therefore doth he "exhort them by our Lord Jesus Christ," implying thereby he did not think they had cast off all respect to him.

6. The more a man be busied with his own employments, the less will his leisure be to meddle with the affairs of others, and, consequently, will create less trouble either to himself or to those who live beside him; for he joineth those two together, a man's working his own work, and his quiet abstinence from meddling with, or troubling others: "That with quietness they work."

7. That the Lord hath established property and dominion of goods, (see upon Ephes. iv. 28, Doct. 2,) which is also clear from this, that he speaks of their "own bread," that is, which they have a proper right unto.

8. Besides those other ways of attaining right and property, by inheritance, Gen. xv. 4, gift, 1 Sam. ix. 9, contract or bargain, Ruth iv. 9, this is one, whatever a man doth purchase by his lawful industry and pains is properly his own, and may be employed by him for his own good and necessary use, with God's allowance; for he calls the bread which they should purchase by working with quietness, "their own bread."

9. The Lord doth ordinarily bless a man's

conscientious diligence in his lawful calling with such a measure of success, as he may have wherewith to sustain himself, and be kept from being burthensome to others; for he sheweth that, upon their working with quietness, "they should eat their own bread."

VER. 13. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

He speaketh, thirdly, to those who walked orderly among them. And, first, he doth lovingly exhort them, as "brethren, not to weary," or become worse, (as the word signifieth,) that is, remiss or slack in well-doing, where, by "well-doing" may be understood conscience-making of their duty in general, and more particularly, 1. Painful diligence in their lawful employments, wherein they were in hazard of being rendered remiss by the loitering carriage of others; 2. Their charitable beneficence towards necessitous objects, from which they were not to desist, under pretext of his forbidding them to maintain idle loiterers, ver. 10, or of the abounding of many unworthy objects, by relieving of whom formerly they had misapplied their charity. To this sense is the like phrase used, Gal. vi. 10.

DOCTRINES.

1. The minister of Christ must so reprove the stubborn and disobedient, as that he do not neglect to speak to the direction and encouragement of those who are better inclined, more obedient and tractable: and as there are several tempers, cases, and conditions among a mixed multitude; so must the minister set himself to give every one their due, neglecting none; this is to cut and divide the word of God aright, 2 Tim. ii. 15: for so doth Paul, having spoken to the disorderly, ver. 12, he doth now speak to those who walked orderly. "But ye, brethren, be not weary."

2. As it is not sufficient for men once to have entered the course of well doing, but they must continue in it, so, considering the many discouragements wherewith men do meet in this course, and those especially which do arise from the bad examples of others, there is no small propenseness, even in the best, to sit up in it; for Paul perceiving a probability of their turning remiss from the bad example of those who walked disorderly, he exhorts them that they would "not be weary in well-doing."

3. It is an incumbent duty to the Lord's people, and a duty which must be made conscience of, if so they would prove themselves orderly walkers, not only to ply their lawful callings diligently, that thereby they may have wherewith to sustain themselves, but also to bestow some part of their gain, a measure at least proportioned to their ability, for the help and supply of necessitous objects; for Paul enjoineth to those who walked orderly, not only to work with quietness, but also to make conscience of "well-doing," under which is contained charitable beneficence to due objects: "Be not weary in well-doing."

4. As many men are most ingenious and witty to find out excuses and pretexts to colour their

neglect of the forementioned duty, what from the unworthiness of many objects, by bestowing their charity on whom they may misapply it and lose it, what from texts of Scripture wrested to justify their avaricious and merciless disposition; so no excuse of that kind will have weight before the Lord, but be looked upon as mere pretexts and shifts to cover and cloak men's wretched naughtiness and averseness from that which they are otherwise sufficiently convinced to be a duty, if they had a mind to it; for Paul foreseeing that some would cover their averseness under those pretexts (see the Exposition) doth here exhort them "not to be weary in well-doing."

VER. 14. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

He prescribes unto them, next, what they should do for censuring the delinquents; and first, "if any man," whatever he was, "did not obey," but remain contumaciously disobedient to the apostle's "word," or exhortation to orderly walking, after he was now again admonished "by this epistle," they, to wit, the church-guides, should "note him;" or as the word doth signify, make a sign or wonder of him, put a mark or brand of infamy upon him: whereby he meaneth no other than that ignominious mark of excommunication, as appears from the second thing here enjoined to the Lord's people in relation to the party so noted, they were to "have no company with him," where all intimate familiarity, to which they were not obliged by any civil or natural bond, is discharged them, which is the very consequent of excommunication expressed by the same word in the original, 1 Cor. v. 11; and in the close of the verse he expresseth one end of inflicting this censure, that the party censured, being thus discountenanced by all, as a man unworthy of their company, may be "ashamed" of his sin, and so ashamed of it, as to turn from it to his duty, as the Greek word implieth, and so it is the same in effect with that end of excommunication which is expressed 1 Cor. v. 5.

DOCTRINES.

1. Even the most faithful, pious, and painful ministers, when they have done their utmost to reclaim obstinate offenders, and waited upon them with all patience and meekness, have ground in reason to forecast and suppose that their pains and diligence will not be blessed unto all, but that some, the more they are laboured with, will prove the more obdured and perverse. The Lord so overruling, hereby to teach his servants, that the utmost of their endeavours can prevail nothing without his blessing, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, and that the glory of their gaining ground upon any should be ascribed to God, and not to themselves, 1 Cor. xv. 20; for even Paul, after his long patience and unwearied diligence, supponeth so much. "And if any man," saith he, "obey not our word by this epistle."

2. It is the will and command of Christ, the king and head of his church, that his public

ministers and church guides, John xx. 23, being convened together, 1 Cor. v. 4, do put a mark and brand of infamy upon those, who with a high hand do persevere in their wickedness after foregoing admonitions stubbornly despised or carelessly neglected, while, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. v. 4, they excommunicate, cut off, and cast out all such from the society of the church, that the leaven of their sin spread not further to infect others, 1 Cor. v. 6, 7; and that the sin of some few, tolerated and connived at by the church, be not a matter of reproach and disgrace to the whole, 1 Cor. v. 1, 2; that others may be deterred from the like obstinacy, by the severity of the censure, 1 Tim. v. 20; and that the party against whom the sentence is pronounced, may, by the Lord's blessing upon that mean, be brought to repentance: for Paul bids "note" the contumacious man with the ignominious brand of excommunication, that he "may be ashamed," or brought to repentance by that mean.

3. Even those sins which are not in their own nature most heinous, when contumacy against foregoing admonitions is joined with them, do make the person guilty liable to this severe censure, in so far as they argue desperate obstinacy and contempt of that authority wherewith Christ hath invested his courts and servants; for Paul will have even the sin of living idly, being joined with contumacy, to be censured thus. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man."

4. The credit of a whole church, the salvation of a man's soul, his gaining to God by repentance, are much to be preferred to the reputation and credit of any particular person, so that the latter ought not to be spared, if there be not another probable mean, for the preservation of, or attaining to the former; for, saith Paul, "if any man obey not our word, note him," to wit, with a mark of infamy, "that he may be ashamed."

5. Church censures, even the highest, are to be dispensed impartially, so that where the sins deserving censure are the same, and the probability of attaining the ends, for which the censure is inflicted, the same, the same censure is to be inflicted upon all without respect of persons; for, he saith, "if any man," without exception, "obey not, note that man."

6. Exhortations in Scripture must be restricted according to the nature of the subject in hand, so that when the Scripture itself, at least in that place, doth not expressly design those to whom the exhortation is directed, we must not think it is always directed indefinitely to all, if so the duty exhorted unto, doth, according to other scriptures, belong only to some; for the two directions of the text, "note that man," and "keep not company with him," are not given to one and the same persons, for all must abstain, even women, from the fellowship of the party excommunicate, Matt. xviii. 17; but the inflicting of the censure, expressed by "noting," belongs not to all, certainly not to women, 1 Tim. ii. 12, nor yet to any but the church guides, according to Heb. xiii. 17, Doct. 6. So many ways advantageous is familiar conversing with

the Lord's people, Prov. x. 21, and xiii. 20, that it is no small punishment for any man to be debarred from it, and therefore it cannot be but exceeding sinful for any to shun it willingly, or not to improve it for his advantage when he doth enjoy it; for Paul enjoineth Christians to "have no company" with the censured party, as a sore and bitter ingredient in his punishment.

7. As nothing hardeneth a sinner more in wickedness, than that, notwithstanding of it, he loseth nothing of his esteem among good men, for any thing he can discern from their countenance and carriage, so there is nothing which proveth, by the Lord's blessing, a more effectual mean to make the sinner ashamed of his sin, and because of shame to turn from it, than when he seeth himself discontenanced, and his company shunned, as a very plague by all, because of it; for Paul enjoins them to "have no company with him," for this very end, "that he may be ashamed," and so as to turn from it to God.

VER. 15. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

The third thing which he prescribeth unto those who walked orderly, is moderation in the execution of the forementioned censure, propounded, first, negatively, that they should "not count him as an enemy," that is, so as to forsake him wholly, as men do their enemies, without any further care of reclaiming him. But next, positively, it was their duty to "admonish him," that is, mind him of his duty and hazard, to wit, if so there might be any hopes to regain him, Matt. vii. 6, and to admonish him as a sickly brother under cure, to wit, so as he might understand he was not wholly cast out of their heart, hopes, and affection, though cut off from all voluntary intimate fellowship with them, ver. 14.

DOCTRINES.

1. While the servants of Christ are labouring to draw the Lord's people from the one extreme of any sin, they have need to guard lest they run upon the other; as, for example, from too much lenity and compliance with scandalous offenders, to the other extremity of bitterness and too much rigidity; for Paul, having indirectly reproved them for the former, doth here guard against the latter. "Yet count him not as an enemy," saith he.

2. The censure of excommunication, when inflicted for contumacy in some particular evils, whether of judgment or practice, and not for total apostasy, doth not exclude the party censured from being a member of the visible church, but only from the actual enjoyment of church privileges, and from the visible communion of the church; for he bids "count" the excommunicate man, "not as an enemy, but as a brother."

3. The censure, even of excommunication itself, should so be used, as that love to the salvation of him who is censured be still retained, and endeavours flowing from love used to reclaim him, when occasion offereth; for so much is enjoined, while he "commands to admonish him as a brother."

4 Then do we kyth [show] our brotherly love and affection aright, and as we ought, towards an "excommunicate" person, when we do not keep intimate and familiar fellowship with him, as we might kyth our affection to others who are not under that sentence, 1 Thess. v. 26, and much less do flatter him in his sin and obstinacy; but when we do admonish him of his sin and hazard, and make him thereby know we love him, and in the mean time deny him any other testimony of our affection, except what civil or natural bonds do bind us to discharge towards him: for Paul having forbidden to converse familiarly with him, will have them kyth their brotherly love towards him only by admonishing him; "But admonish him as a brother."

VER. 16. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

In the second part of the chapter he concludeth the epistle, which he doth, first, in this verse, by a prayer to God consisting of two petitions, first, because the censuring of the contumacious, presently enjoined, might occasion some troubling of the church's peace, he prayeth that "the Lord of peace himself," who alone createth and entertaineth peace in his church's borders, *Psa. cxlvii. 14*, might give them peace, that is, both a peaceable frame of spirit desirous of peace, *John iii. 15*, and the blessing of peace or harmonious walking together in Christian society, *Psa. xxix. 11*; and this "always," that is, a lasting, solid, and continuing peace, and "by all means," to wit, a peace, whereof though God be the only author, yet they were to seek after it, by all means lawful and the utmost of their fervent endeavours; for by praying for it "by all means," he doth indirectly point at their duty to seek after it "by all means." Secondly, he prayeth, that in order to this and to other ends, God might "be with them all," by his gracious presence and sweet influences of his Spirit for assisting them with strength, direction, and courage, to go on in the way of their duty against all opposition, *Rom. viii. 31*.

DOCTRINES.

1. A minister who would have his preaching blessed with success among a people, must be much in prayer to God for his gracious presence and powerful concurrence. He must begin with prayer, he must end with prayer, yea, and all along his work, he must now and then dart up a fervent desire to God for that end; for Paul began this epistle with prayer, *chap. i. 2*, he prayed several times in his passing through it, *chap. i. 11, ii. 16, and iii. 5*, and now he doth conclude it with prayer. "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always."

2. We should labour to give such styles to God in prayer as are most suitable to our present suit, and may furnish us with a ground of confidence that we shall be heard in what we ask; for while Paul suiteth for "peace" from God, he calleth him "the Lord of peace."

3. As there are oftentimes ground of fear lest alienation of minds, schisms, rends, and heart-burnings, may possibly follow within a church, upon their impartial exercise of discipline and inflicting of the highest censure, so the Lord's servants ought not to surcease upon the mere possibility or appearance of such hazard, but are to do their duty, and deal with God the more earnestly for preventing any feared inconvenience of that kind; for Paul projecting that the exercise of discipline might breed some disturbance to the church's peace, doth not bid them desist, but prayeth, "now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always."

4. As peace and harmony among Christian societies is with great difficulty attained and preserved, and is no less than a singular work of God, considering our own averseness from it, *Rom. iii. 17*, and Satan's enmity to it, *John viii. 44*, so that peace only is to be regarded whereof the Lord is the bestower and approver; a peace that is not prejudicial to truth and holiness, *Heb. xii. 14*, but only curbeth and restraineth our sinful and turbulent humours, *2 Cor. xii. 20*; for he prayeth for such a peace, while he seeketh peace from God, and sheweth it cannot be had but from him, while he saith, "the Lord of peace himself give you peace."

5. Though peace among Christians be a special work of God, (see *Doct. 4.*) and therefore to be sought from him, yet our prayers of that kind should be seconded by our own serious endeavours and all lawful means essayed for that end, so as that we not only carefully eschew whatever may on our part give cause of rending, *1 Cor. viii. 13*, but also be not easily provoked, when cause of rending is given by others, *1 Cor. xiii. 5*; and that, when a rent is made, we spare no pains, nor stand upon any thing, which is properly our own, for having it removed, *Gen. xiii. 8, 9*; and do not weary to follow after peace, when it seemeth to fly from us, *Heb. xii. 14*, and all our endeavours have but small appearance of present success, *2 Cor. xii. 15*; for while he seeketh peace from God "by all means," he doth indirectly incite them to seek after it by all means.

6. The peace and concord which should be sought after among Christians, is not an outside agreement only, *Psa. lv. 21*, nor a mere cessation from debate and strife for a time, until either party see an offered advantage, but a lasting, solid, and continuing peace; and therefore an union in hearts and affections, *Phil. ii. 2*, which being once united, are not easily rent asunder, *1 Sam. xviii. 1*, with *xix. 2*; an union in truth not in error, *Isa. viii. 12*, so that neither party may have reason to repent their entering it; and an union not in a carnal but a spiritual interest, even that they may strive together for the faith of the gospel, *Phil. i. 27*; for he prayeth "the Lord to give them peace always," that is, a lasting, solid peace.

7. As the Lord's gracious presence with his people, in any plentiful measure, is annexed to their peaceable frame of spirit, and serious endeavours after peace and concord among themselves, and as their implacable rending humours do grieve the Lord's Spirit, and provoke him to

withdraw from them, so sound peace and concord among societies doth much depend upon the Lord's gracious presence, which, where it is, doth not a little quiet and put to silence our rending and dividing humours. Neither can there be any sound or solid peace but among the people with whom God is; for the grant of those two petitions seem here presented as mutually depending upon one another: "The Lord give you peace always," and "the Lord be with you all."

VER. 17. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

Before he conclude with his usual farewell wish, ver. 18, he doth here premit a preface to it, wherein, having called the following wish his "salutation," that is, an expression and testimony of his good will and affection, he shows he did write it with his "own hand," and that it was his use so to do at the close of "every epistle," which did serve as a "token," or certain mark, whereby his own epistles might be distinguished from all others forged and feigned in his name, and he hints at the reason why it was such a differing mark, to wit, because his way of writing was always uniform, and hardly could be undiscernibly counterfeited by any other, which is implied, while he saith, "so I write."

DOCTRINES.

1. The sending of salutations by word or writ, that we may thereby testify our continuing affection to absent friends, is not a matter of common courtesy and good manners only, but a duty to be performed for conscience sake, as tending to entertain love and good will among Christians; for while Paul doth never omit to send his salutation, it evidently appeareth he did not look upon it as a matter of compliment but of conscience. "The salutation of Paul."

2. Our salutation, whether of present or absent friends, should express our wishes to God for things spiritual and the choicest mercies to be bestowed on them, wherein we ought to be real, hearty, and affectionate, and not formal, or acted from the force of custom only; for he calleth his farewell wish, ver. 18, to which he annexeth an hearty "Amen," his salutation. "The salutation of Paul."

3. It hath been an ancient sleight of Satan, and of his instruments, to thrust upon the church (so far as in them did lie) false and forged writings, and give them out for Canonic Scripture, thereby to make the truth and authority of all Scripture questionable; for to prevent such impostures, Paul did write his "salutation with his own

hand, which is the token in every epistle," saith he.

4. That God hath sufficiently provided in his word against the fore-mentioned evil, see upon Col. iv. 18. "Which is the token in every epistle: so I write."

VER. 18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Resteth the very thing, which he did so write, with which he shuts up the epistle, to wit, his hearty wish that the free and undeserved favour of God in Christ, with all the fruits and tokens of it, might be conveyed unto them "all" without exception, to which he affixeth his "Amen," signifying "Let it be so," and it shall be so, in testimony both of his fervent desire and confidence.

DOCTRINES.

1. Whatever be the eminence of a person or persons, for their inherent graces and gracious qualifications, yet it is only God's free grace and undeserved favour, and not their own merit, which must be relied on for closing their accounts, or for obtaining any spiritual or temporal mercy at the hands of God; for though he commended them highly for their patience, faith, love, and other graces, chap. i. 3, 4, yet he closeth all by wishing God's free grace and favour to them, as the fountain cause of all things they stood in need of or could expect. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

2. As there is an inexhaustible fountain of free grace in God, which can water all, without exception of any, and will extend itself to as many as he seeth fit, Rom. ix. 18, so the more of it we wish unto, or is according to our wish bestowed upon others, there doth not the less remain behind unto ourselves; for Paul, who wisheth grace and favour to them all, had received a very large measure of it himself, and knew that how large a measure soever was bestowed upon them, there would not be the less for him. Therefore doth he thus close, "The grace," &c.

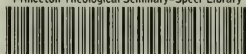
POSTSCRIPT.

The second epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

The truth of this postscript is no less suspected than the former, and this epistle judged more probably to have been written also from Corinth, where Paul continued a year and a half after he came from Athens, Acts xviii. 1, with 11. See upon the postscript of the first epistle.

THE END.

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